The Liaison Group on Road Accident Statistics

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 10th May 2013
in Conference Room 3, Victoria Quay

1.1 **Attendees**

**Police Forces and Councils:**
Inspector Simon Bradshaw (representing Police Scotland)
Alan Murphy (Police Scotland, The Lothians & Scottish Borders division, formerly Lothian & Borders Police)
Gary Patton (Edinburgh City Council)
Eliana Clark (Police Scotland, Forth Valley division, formerly Central Police)
Martin Parker (Police Scotland, Dumfries & Galloway division, formerly Dumfries & Galloway constabulary)

**Users of the data:**
Andrew Fraser (Senior Accident Investigation Officer, Falkirk council/CoSLA rep. at SCRAS)
Hugh Logan (Highland Council)
Nansen Buchan (Aberdeenshire Council)
Steven Sellars (Fife Council; rep. SCOTS)
Kerry Keiloh (Fife Council)
Kathleen Braidwood (ROSPA)
David Connolly, MVA Consultancy

**Scottish Government / Transport Scotland (TS):**
Matt Perkins, Transport Statistician (Chairman)
Andrew Knight, Transport Statistics branch (Secretary)
Charlie Lewis, Transport Statistics branch
Mike Berry, Road Safety Policy
Michael McDonnell, Road Safety Scotland
Stuart Wilson Transport Scotland Trunk Roads Network Management
Jennifer McCahill, Scottish Safety Camera Programme

**Department for Transport:**
Daryl Lloyd, Road Accident Statistician

1.2 **Apologies for Absence:**
Sergeant Jon Barron (Police Scotland)
Paul Middleton (WDM)
Fran Warren, Social Research
Margaret Laing, (Police Scotland, Tayside division, formerly Tayside police)
Andy Duff, (Moray Council)
John Santarossa, (Police Scotland statistical unit, formerly Strathclyde police)
Stuart Geddes, Stirling Council
Irene Magill (HM Inspectorate of Constabulary)
Carlyn Fraser (Clackmannanshire Council)
Kathy Johnston (Transport Analytical Services)

**Introduction & previous minutes**

1.3 Matt Perkins welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then asked all delegates to introduce themselves and explain their role.

1.4 The Group had agreed the minutes of the previous meeting, previously distributed. Matt Perkins went over the action points from that meeting, those not covered elsewhere in the agenda are:
- Action point 1, to include a clear language description in the data collection. Matt Perkins explained that investigations revealed that Fife were already providing the data directly to WDM, Northern, Grampian, Lothian & Borders, Tayside and Central would be able to provide the data and Strathclyde and Dumfries & Galloway were unable to provide it.

**Action 1: Transport Statistics** to carry out further work with WDM and individual police forces to see what can be done about sending clear language descriptions.
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• Action point 2, Mike Berry mentioned that a survey of 120 users of MAST had shown that most had found the data useful. However, one finding was that it did not seem to be consistent with local data. Matt Perkins explained that the data for MAST was coming from DfT which was different from that collected by Transport Statistics. It was now planned to provide data directly to MAST from the Scottish database in addition to the data from DfT.

Action 2: Anyone interested in using MAST to contact Mike Berry (Michael.Berry@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk)

3. Transport Statistics Work Plan (paper 2)

3.1 Matt Perkins explained that Transport Statistics would continue to publish transport and injury road accidents publications. Consideration had been given to bringing forward the publication of Key Reported Road Casualties Scotland but as it was likely that between DfT and Transport Statistics, there would be 4 different sets of figures it would be better to publish close to DfT’s publication for consistency. Some analysis had also been done to find out the differences between the availability of the data and the final figures shown in Reported Road Casualties Scotland in October. This found that there could be quite large differences in some of the figures if they were to be published earlier. It was noted that the 2010 injury road accident targets in the publications had now been replaced with the new 2020 targets. There had been a consultation of statistical outputs and one of the conclusions was that users found the hard copy of Reported Road Casualties Scotland and Scottish Transport Statistics useful to these will continue to be produced. There had also been positive feedback on the under reporting of casualties but there was a request to make the separation between accidents and casualties clearer. There was also good feedback on Key Reported Road Casualties Scotland but some users would like the data earlier. It will be published on 25 June 2013 and Reported Road Casualties Scotland in late October 2013.

3.2 Consideration is being given to changing the format of some of the tables in STS and to publishing the data earlier as WEB tables but producing the hard copy later. There will be a new section in KRRCS outlining how provisional data for the previous calendar year will change between when it is received and publication of RRCS in October. It is also intended to do more work on improving the layout of the Transport Statistics Website. David Connolly asked about what was happening with the loss of information from the National Travel Survey. Matt Perkins said that work was being done to compare Scottish Household Survey data with the National Travel Survey to establish travel patterns and with the Travel Diary to check if the data could be weighted.

Matt Perkins said that there were plans to include more analytical articles in publications and asked for thoughts on articles for Reported Road Casualties Scotland to follow on from the work done on road safety priorities in 2011. Possible topics included vulnerable road users, accidents involving HGVs and possibly foreign drivers. Discussion followed.

3.3 Martin Parker said that it had been found that there was a problem with elderly drivers in Dumfries & Galloway. He suggested that the problem might be due to the lack of public transport in the area and that a report was due to be published. Kathleen Braidwood said that she was concerned that police officers might be looking at the vehicle and deciding whether someone was travelling to work rather than asking the driver. She suggested that there might be scope for updating the journey purpose variable. She said that ROSPA had done some research on driveway accidents and asked if information was available about accidents involving children near the family home. Both Steven Sellars and Simon Bradshaw said that they would be interested in accidents involving pedestrians. Daryl Lloyd said that Transport for London was going to be producing a report on pedestrians. David Connolly said that it would be interesting to calculate pedestrian/cyclist rates for different types of road and Gary Patton said as Edinburgh is promoting cycling he would be interested in both pedestrian and cycling figures. Hugh Logan said that a study had been done on foreign drivers a few years ago. However, it was inconclusive as it was sometimes difficult to identify foreign drivers if hire cars were involved. Mike Berry said that the commonwealth games may mean that there are more foreign drivers. Matt Perkins said that some analysis for foreign drivers could be done using the postcode. Michael McDonnell explained that they currently distribute various leaflets in different
languages. David Connolly suggested that more research could be made into vehicle platooning. Matt Perkins then thanked everyone for their suggestions which will help inform decisions on articles.

3.4 Jennifer McCahill said that the Key Scottish Safety Camera Programme Statistical bulletin used a simple methodology to make it easy to understand. The UK Statistics Authority were currently considering the publication and looking for feedback. The intention was to produce a more in-depth publication. At the moment the data comes from partnerships. It would be useful to map all sites, compare the data with that held by Transport Statistics and get in touch with other sources. David Connolly expressed an interest in speed cameras and HGVs. Alan Murphy said that the current film cameras were being replaced with online cameras. Simon Bradshaw asked what it was that had been produced? Jennifer McCahill said that the statistics bulletin had been available since 2009 but it was felt to be too simple. Simon Bradshaw then asked if the data was available? Jennifer McCahill said that the data could be provided. Andrew Fraser suggested that people may be interested in a book by Dr Helen Wells, *The Fast and The Furious: Drivers, Speed Cameras and Control in a Risk Society*. Matt Perkins suggested that the Safety Camera programme could use the LGRAS mailing list to ensure members were kept up to date with developments in the safety camera work.

4. STATS 19 data collection developments (paper 5)

4.1 Daryl Lloyd explained that the pilot for the CRASH system had started last November. Since then there have been problems with data disconnection and validation. In some cases it is taking longer to implement than expected but the problems will be resolved. A decision on how to move forward will be made in August 2013. There were between 20 and 28 forces who would be taking it up. Although it could not be guaranteed that the project would be taken forward it was looking likely. The forthcoming data quality review would take place between 18 and 20 months to give CRASH a chance to be used. So far the 2008 data quality changes were coming in slowly. The next SCRAS meeting was due to take place on 1 July 2013. Simon Bradshaw said that Police Scotland had no plans to introduce CRASH and that the old accident data systems would remain in place for the foreseeable future. He then asked about the cost implications of implementing the system. Daryl Lloyd said that a CRASH user group was being set up and that it would eventually move to the Home Office.

4.2 Simon Bradshaw said that now that Police Scotland was comprised of 14 divisions, he would like the previous bodies to be referred to as ‘legacy forces’. Daryl Lloyd said that if the forces were to change to divisions he would need to know how to convert these from the councils. Matt Perkins said that as the accident data for 2012 had been collected by the old forces then the tables in the forthcoming publications would reflect this. Simon Bradshaw said that ACPOS no longer exists, the national assets are now available for the whole of Scotland and each division has responsibility for road policing in their area. At the moment it is not possible to have a common platform. Alan Murphy said that at the moment they were making changes to crime statistics and they would hope to tackle data quality on a national basis.

Action 3: Transport Statistics to look at tables by police force included in publications and present in new format to show police Scotland structure.

4.3 Daryl Lloyd said that provisional statistics for Great Britain will be published on 27 June 2013. There will be articles on young drivers and a model showing what proportion of change there is in the number of casualties due to extreme weather. There is to be a meeting with the Association of British Insurers and ACPO to discuss access to insurance data. David Connolly suggested that there may be issues with some of the insurance data due to false claims for whiplash. Daryl Lloyd said that although he had not seen the data yet, he hoped that it might give more data on unreported accidents. Kathleen Braidwood suggested that consideration be given to obtaining data from black boxes in vehicles but questioned who owned the data.
5. **STATS 19 data quality issues**

5.1 Matt Perkins gave a short presentation on data quality issues with Stats19 and explained that he had been asked to table a paper at the next SCRAS meeting in July on behalf of LGRAS to cover data quality issues in Scotland. He then invited the group to discuss. Gary Patton was concerned that there were data quality issues due to there being three separate databases i.e. local authority, the police and transport statistics. Andrew Fraser suggested that data quality had greatest effect at the local authority level, since that is where detailed accident studies (as opposed to simply trend analyses) were required to be carried out. He also re-iterated some of the flaws in the design of the STATS 19 system, in that man of the fields were not mutually exclusive and exhaustive (MEE) – a fundamental requirement of a data collection system. A simple example of “non-mutual-exclusivity” is provided by 1.14 Road Type, where an accident on a slip road could be coded 2, 6 or 7. This would not be possible in a properly designed system. Gary Patton said that he was liable to fix errors that he found but did not inform the police of the changes. Andrew Fraser on the other hand queries every doubtful code and ensures, as far as possible, that he has agreement with the police before making changes. Gary Patton asked if there was a possibility of providing copies of the data to the local authorities for comparison. The following discussion suggested that this could be but there would be issues with timings to meet Local Authority requirements. Simon Bradshaw asked if it would be possible to provide some guidance of particular variables that there were problems with, identify issues of concern and decide how to tackle the problem. He said that some police officers were not aware that if a pedal cyclist is injured that this is reportable. Daryl Lloyd suggested that there could be a simplified STATS 20 booklet. Andrew Fraser suggested that experts in database taxonomy are consulted on STATS 19 and suggested Dr Alastair Ross as a suitable person to consult as he is co-author of the paper *Effective Taxonomies For Database Management*.

- **Action 4:** Transport Statistics to send round a list of known data quality issues for members to update.
- **Action 5:** Transport Statistics to discuss the resulting document with Police Scotland and DfT.
- **Action 6:** List of known data quality issues to be published on TS website to assist users of the data.
- **Action 7:** Transport Statistics and Police Scotland to pursue a shortened user guide for the Stats 19 collection with DfT.

5. **Any other business**

Michael McDonnell suggested that CRASH might be useful as a topic for a road safety seminar. He also said that a research report on prolific illegal driving was about to be released [Secretary note: The link can be found here: http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/analysis/research/publications ] David Connolly suggested that a research project looking at moving pedal cyclists from the road to cycle ways might be a good idea. Matt Perkins asked members if they liked having presentations included within the meeting? Michael McDonnell said that he was in favour of them. The general consensus was that presentations as part of and in the context of the LGRAS meeting would be useful. People would struggle to justify an additional afternoon of seminars or a seminar held on a different day.

6. **Date of next meeting**

Members were happy with the annual meeting and Matt Perkins agreed to organise another meeting in late Spring/early Summer 2014.

Transport Scotland  
Transport Statistics branch  
May 2012