The Liaison Group on Road Accident Statistics

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 16th May 2014
in Conference Room 3, Victoria Quay

1.1 Attendees

Police Forces and Councils:
Inspector Simon Bradshaw (representing Police Scotland)
Sally MacKenzie (Police Scotland, The Lothians & Scottish Borders division, formerly Lothian & Borders Police)
Eliana Clark (Police Scotland, Forth Valley division, formerly Central Police)
Mark Hollinsworth (Police Scotland, Force Statistician)

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 Keilloh (Fife Council)
Sandy Allan (ROSPA)

Scottish Government / Transport Scotland (TS):
Matt Perkins, Transport Statistician (Chair)
Andrew Knight, Transport Statistics branch (Secretary)
Charlie Lewis, Transport Statistics branch
Paul Middleton (WDM)
Darren Peaston, Social Research

Department for Transport:
Fay Graves, Road Accident Statistician

1.2 Apologies for Absence:
Karen Grant (Northern Constabulary)
Fiona McKie (Police Scotland, Dumfries & Galloway division, formerly Dumfries & Galloway constabulary)
Martin Parker (Police Scotland, Dumfries & Galloway division, formerly Dumfries & Galloway constabulary)
David Connolly, SYSTRA Ltd
Tina Ward (Police Scotland, Performance & Strategic Analysis)
Michael McDonnell, Road Safety Scotland
Gary Patton (Edinburgh City Council)
Sergeant Jon Barron (Police Scotland)
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)
Mike Berry (Road Safety, Transport Scotland)
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 agreed the minutes of the previous meeting, previously distributed. Matt Perkins went over the action points from that meeting.

LGRAS 2013 Action 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, Lothian & Borders, Tayside and Central were now providing the data which was being passed to WDM. Grampian, Strathclyde and Dumfries & Galloway were unable to provide it.

**LGRAS 2013 Action 2:** Anyone interested in using MAST to contact Mike Berry (Michael.Berry@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk)

**LGRAS 2013 Action 3:** All tables in the forthcoming Reported Road Casualties Scotland publication would be in a format showing the new Police Scotland structure.

**LGRAS 2013 Action 4 and 5:** A document outlining data quality issues was circulated and has now been discussed with the police.

**LGRAS 2013 Action 6:** A copy of the spreadsheet with the data quality issues would be placed on the Transport Scotland Website.

**LGRAS 2014 Action 1:** Transport Scotland and Police Scotland to pursue a shortened user guide for the STATS 19 collection with DfT – LGRAS 2013 Action 7 carried forward.

2. **Transport Statistics Work Plan (paper 2)**

2.1 Matt Perkins explained that Transport Statistics would continue to publish transport and injury road accidents publications.

2.2 Steven Sellars said that he found the Key Reported Road Casualty Scotland and Reported Road Casualties Scotland publications very useful. Simon Bradshaw asked if pre-release access would be available for Key Reported Road Casualties Scotland. Matt Perkins explained that the publication could be shared with a limited number of named individuals in Police Scotland within the five days pre-release period allowed in the Code of Practise for Official Statistics. Sally MacKenzie asked if the October edition would contain more detail. Matt Perkins explained that there would be much more detail and that the main change to publication tables would be the replacement of the legacy forces with Police Scotland divisions. He also suggested that there might be a fact sheet style article about different road users. He then asked members if they had any suggestions. Steven Sellars said that he would be interested in analysis of pedal cyclists. Simon Bradshaw said that there had been a surge in pedal cycle accidents and an increase in elderly casualties. Matt Perkins said that Transport Statistics may have a look at these but it will depend on the availability of resources in the run up to publication. Sandy Allan suggested that specific road users could be targeted, particularly the purpose of their journey. Matt Perkins said that consideration could be given to analysis of the new variables that included in the data collection. However, it would be better to wait until more data was available. Also in the case of the seatbelt variable it would also be useful to know whether the data is being collected for all casualties or just fatalities. Andrew Fraser suggested web-only publication of the commentaries to reduce the size of the document. Matt Perkins explained that the largest part of the costs in publishing the publication was for putting it on the Website. Sally MacKenzie asked about the publication of Scottish Transport Statistics 2014 in 2015 and what year the accident data would refer to. Matt Perkins explained that STS used to be published in December but had now been delayed until February of the following year in order to do more analysis of the data. The accident data that will be published in STS 2014 will be for 2013 and will be the same as those used in Reported Road Casualties 2013 published in October.

3. **Transport Scotland Road Safety Research Projects (paper 4)**

3.1 Matt Perkins drew members attention to the list of completed and on-going research projects. Fay Graves mentioned that DfT were looking into the availability of information on pedestrian casualties involving alcohol. Sandy Allan asked whether there were any plans to introduce graduated driver licensing. Matt Perkins said that there was no research on young driver interventions at the moment but he would ask Road Safety policy colleagues to provide an update to the group. Simon Bradshaw asked whether there was any research on speed awareness. Darren Peaston said that there was a big evidence gap and he would ask policy colleagues to provide an update on the policy position.
4. DfT update

4.1 Fay Graves explained that Daryll Lloyd was on secondment at the moment but would be back in post in the Autumn. The road accident dataset for 2013 was being closed and the main results would be published on 26 June 2014. The main publication will then be published in late September. Road casualty statistics continue to be published quarterly and there has been a 2 percent decline in fatalities up to September 2013. The SCRAS meeting that was planned for the Summer will now take place in the Autumn. The next review of the STATS19 system will now take place in late 2015/early 2016. DfT are also planning a review of the contributory factors to see how well they are being recorded, whether they are the right ones and the level of under reporting. This will be a possible external research project and will be looked at in the Autumn. The specification for a research project will be started shortly, with Transport Scotland, to look at the prevalence of use of mobile phones and the wearing of seatbelts. There are also plans to look at the new drug driving legislation which is not in force yet comparing 20 and 30 mph speed limits, Retesting of serious driving offenders and speed awareness courses. Fay also updated the group on work that DfT have done to look at the impact of weather (e.g. severe winters / wet summers) on casualty numbers. It is hoped that the information will be included in the main Reported Road Casualties report. Fay also updated the group on progress with CRASH which is now being managed by the Home Office and the development of CRASH version 5 was now in progress. It was being tested by Surrey police and it was hoped to roll it out from January 2015. Sally MacKenzie asked if all forces in England were using CRASH at the moment? Fay Graves explained that it was not mandatory at the moment but may become so in the future.

5. Police Scotland Update (including work on data quality)

5.1 Simon Bradshaw said that for the time being there would still be 8 legacy forces providing data to TS using legacy IT systems. The project team had recently been given a presentation on CRASH and although an option it could take some time to implement. One of the biggest problems that they had was being unable to analyse the road accident data at a national level. In order to address the issues of data collection they have been looking at ways to obtain a single dataset, as well as looking at the forms used to collect the data. Mark Hollinsworth suggested that significant changes in staffing in the statistics unit have also contributed to the problem of data provision. Limited resources and competing priorities also make it difficult to change the method of collecting the data. However, they were hoping to resolve this by the end of the year. Simon Bradshaw said that the design of the form would help with the data quality. Fay Graves asked if there was a timescale for resolving the problems and if there was a data quality issue with having 8 forces. Sally MacKenzie said that the timescale would not affect the data quality. Mark Hollinsworth said that it was possible that changes in staff that could affect the quality of the data. Matt Perkins suggested that the data quality issues would be the same as those that Transport Statistics were receiving. Sally MacKenzie said that the CRASH system could be the way forward. Mark Hollinsworth said that they hoped to make progress in the next 18 months. Andrew Fraser wanted to know what processes are involved by the different police forces in collecting and validating accident data? Matt Perkins suggested that the police might be able to use the Transport Statistics system to process and check the quality of the data and that Mark Hollinsworth had been into TS to see a demonstration of it.

5.2 Paul Middleton explained that WDM were having problems with the format that some of the legacy forces were sending the accident data to the local authorities. WDM provide software to local authorities which processes the data that comes from the legacy forces. However, there have been a number of times that there have been inconsistencies in the format of the data that has been sent to the local authorities. This has meant that every time it happens work needs to be done to resolve the problem. Mark Hollinsworth and Sally MacKenzie said that their data was sent to the local authorities in the STATS21 format. Kerry Keiloh said that at the moment they receive damage only data in addition to injury data. She wondered if they would still receive the damage only cases in the future? Mark Hollinsworth and Nansen Buchan said that they no longer collect damage only accident data. Eliana Clark said that they send both the STATS19 data and the free text to the council. Sally
MacKenzie explained that the data was sent to the council before it was sent to Transport Statistics. Matt Perkins asked Simon Bradshaw if the sending of data from legacy forces to the local authorities was part of the data quality work being undertaken by Jon Barron. Simon Bradshaw confirmed that it was. Paul Middleton said he would look into the specific issues that there were with the format of the data. Andrew Fraser suggested that process mapping would help us to understand how data were being collected and validated across the country.

LGRAS 2014 Action 4: Simon Bradshaw to provide an update to the group on the provision of accident data to local authorities.

LGRAS 2014 Action 5: Paul Middleton to look into the specific issues that there were with the format of the data.


LGRAS 2014 Action 7: Andrew Fraser to provide samples of a previous process mapping exercise.

LGRAS 2014 Action 8: Fay Graves to look into what legislative requirements are available in respect of the collection of injury road accidents.

6. Data quality issues

6.1 Sally MacKenzie said that there were problems with the 'pupil on way to/from school' variable and the times being outside school hours. Fay Graves explained this was one of the reasons that variable had been dropped after the last data quality review. The information is now obtained using the age of the casualty and time of accident. Matt Perkins said that he would note this on the data quality spreadsheet. Fay Graves suggested that it might be useful to include an extra column for inconsistencies between variables and for the scale of the problem. Matt Perkins said that he would arrange for the spreadsheet to be put on the Transport Scotland website alongside the other technical documents. Andrew Fraser was concerned about the dropping of 3.13 School Pupil Casualty and pointed out the illogicality of the additions to 2.29 Journey Purpose of Driver/Rider.

LGRAS 2014 Action 9: Matt Perkins to arrange for the data quality spreadsheet to be put on the Transport Scotland website.

7. STATS19 Form Design Research Project

7.1 Matt Perkins explained the background to collecting the injury road accident data with each legacy force using different forms. There was now a need to use a single form that would be more user friendly. Members were given sight of an early draft specification for a research project to look at form design. This is a good time to review the form as the next data quality review is not due until late 2015 or 2016. Andrew Fraser asked if consideration would be given to including the extra data that the police collect (witness statements, make of car, insurance details) within the new form? Matt Perkins said that these details would be taken into account when designing the new form. Andrew Fraser asked about the process for procuring the research into the design of the new form. Matt Perkins said that consideration would be given to the scale of the project and the value for money. Matt Perkins said that he would continue to update the draft procurement form and keep members informed.

Action 10: Matt Perkins to update the draft procurement form and keep members informed.

8. Any other business

Matt Perkins explained that this would be his last meeting as he would be taking a career break from late July and that TS Analytical Services are currently looking for a replacement to start in mid-August.

Andrew Fraser thanked Matt for his efforts toward improving the STATS19 system.

9. Date of next meeting

Members were happy with the annual meeting and another meeting will be organised around the same time in 2015.
Transport Scotland
Transport Statistics branch
May 2014