



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Transport Research Series

Evaluation of Bikesafe Scotland

**Transport Research
Planning Group**



EVALUATION OF BIKESAFE SCOTLAND

**Rachel Ormston, Anna Dudleston and Stephen Pearson
NFO Social Research**

**Steve Stradling
Napier University**

**Scottish Executive Social Research
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report presents the findings of research evaluating the Bikesafe Scotland initiative. Bikesafe Scotland is a multi-agency initiative aimed at reducing the number and severity of crashes involving motorcyclists in Scotland. It was launched in 2000, and, to date, its main component has been the Police Assessed Ride programme. The Assessed Ride programme offers free on-the-road assessments of motorcycling skills from trained police motorcyclists to all holders of a full motorcycling licence in Scotland.

2. The research consisted of five main components. First, desk-based analysis of accident statistics was carried out in order to present a picture of motorcycle accidents in Scotland. Second, a self-completion before-and-after survey was carried out with people who took part in the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme between mid-June and late-September 2002. Third, a separate self-completion questionnaire was sent to people who took part in assessed rides in 2001. Fourth, in-depth telephone interviews were carried out with representatives from the organisations involved in running Bikesafe Scotland. Finally, in-depth phone interviews were carried out with stakeholders from the motorcycle industry.

Motorcycle accidents in Scotland

3. The number of motorcyclists killed or injured on Scotland's roads fell in the early 1990s but has increased again since 1997. In 2001, there were 1,174 motorcycle casualties in Scotland – the highest number since 1992. Older motorcyclists, aged over 30, account for an increasing proportion of casualties. While 30-39 year olds accounted for just 14% of all motorcycle casualties in 1991, by 2001 they accounted for 35%.

4. While over half of motorcycle accidents occur in built-up areas, the proportion of accidents in non-built up areas is increasing. Further, accidents in non-built up areas are more likely than accidents in built-up areas to be fatal or serious.

Bikesafe Scotland

5. Approximately 1,769 assessed rides have been carried out in the three years since the launch of Bikesafe Scotland. Although the number of assessed rides carried out in some force areas has declined during this period, the main reason for this appears to be resource difficulties rather than declining applications.

6. The vast majority of Bikesafe Scotland participants are male and 67% fall into the 35-44 and 45-54 year-old age groups. Twenty-nine per cent of respondents to the pre-course survey were aged 35 or older when they obtained a full motorcycle licence, while around a fifth had returned to riding in the last five years after a break in riding of a year or more. This suggests that Bikesafe is attracting some riders who might be classed as 'born again bikers'. Forty-three per cent of respondents had gained their motorcycle licence through the Direct Access scheme, which allows riders aged over 21 years to ride a bike of any size once they pass their test.

Views on the Assessed Ride programme

7. Almost 100% of respondents to the 2002 post-course survey and the survey of 2001 participants said that they found the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme 'very' or 'fairly useful'. The vast majority 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they would recommend the scheme and that all bikers should be encouraged to go on it. There was some suggestion that the assessed ride was not long enough however. A fifth of respondents 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with the statement "the assessed ride took just the right amount of time", while a similar proportion 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that it "was not long enough to learn much".

8. Qualitative interviewees highlighted the fact that Bikesafe Scotland is free, that it is run by the police and that it has improved relations between the police and the motorcycling community. Lack of resources was seen as a major problem for the Assessed Ride programme. This in turn made improving publicity to attract greater numbers difficult. Interviewees also expressed concern about whether Bikesafe encourages participants to take further training, and whether it is successful in reaching key target groups. While it was suggested that Bikesafe does attract 'born again bikers', it was seen as less successful in attracting sports bike riders. Although 27% of respondents to the 2002 pre-course survey said they rode sports bikes, suggesting Bikesafe does attract some participants from this group, there may be a case for focusing more on this target group if they are seen as particularly vulnerable.

Impact on rider attitudes and behaviour

9. Findings on the impact of Bikesafe Scotland on the behaviour and attitudes of participants were somewhat mixed. There seemed to be an improvement in the proportion of respondents saying they 'never' or 'hardly ever' "brake too quickly on a slippery road" or "find your back wheel slipping away when you take a bend, almost causing you to lose control". These types of riding behaviour appear to be associated with control over the bike. Since "loss of control" was identified as the most common precipitating factor in fatal motorcycle accidents where the motorcyclist was judged to be primarily responsible in a TRL report based on analysis of police fatal accident reports (Lynam et al, 2001), this appears to be a positive outcome for Bikesafe.

10. Participants also seem to *feel* that Bikesafe has a positive impact on their riding behaviour. Less than 5% of participants agreed with the statement "Bikesafe did not make any difference to the way I ride my bike" and over three quarters agreed that Bikesafe had taught them to ride more defensively. 'Defensive riding' is difficult to measure quantitatively. However, around a third of all respondents said that the most useful elements of Bikesafe were tips about 'traffic awareness, looking ahead and reading the roads correctly' – all elements associated with defensive riding – which suggests that Bikesafe was fairly successful in promoting defensive riding.

11. In relation to riding speed, however, while the proportion of respondents saying they would normally ride *below* the speed limit in roads in built-up areas increased after participation in Bikesafe, the proportion saying they would ride at 10 or more miles *above* the speed limit on faster roads in non-built up areas also increased. The proportion of post-course participants who say they often exceed the speed limit on motorways and on country roads is higher than the proportion of pre-course participants, while a higher proportion of post-course

participants say they ‘never or hardly ever’ exceed the speed limit in town. Although the proportion of respondents indicating increased speed post-Bikesafe is relatively small – for example, the proportion of respondents indicating ‘normal’ speeds above the speed limit on two faster roads increased by 13% post-Bikesafe – given that the proportion of serious and fatal motorcycle accidents is much higher in non-built up areas, findings relating to participants’ speeds on these roads are cause for concern.

Potential improvements and issues for the future

12. In terms of improving the Bikesafe scheme, the findings on speeding, discussed above, suggests that there may be a need for a greater focus on attitudes to riding as part of the Assessed Ride programme. It may be that some riders are engaging in ‘risk compensation’ after taking part in Bikesafe – they feel that they have become better riders and are therefore better equipped to ride at speed. Focusing on attitudes to riding as part of the course could address this issue by aiming to curb riders’ confidence in their ability to ride safely at speed, and in fact several forces have already modified their Bikesafe programme to focus more on riding attitudes. The research also found that two-thirds of 2002 Bikesafe participants said their assessor had not suggested they undertake any further training. This suggests that the advanced training message could also be better promoted by Bikesafe organisers.

13. Some of the stakeholders interviewed thought there might be scope to involve trainers from the private or voluntary sectors in running Bikesafe Scotland or a similar scheme. However, it was recognised that this would create various difficulties around charging, resources and the credibility of these trainers. Private trainers would be unlikely to offer provision free of charge, while it was suggested that there is a shortage of advanced motorcycle trainers in some areas of Scotland. Further, motorcycle instructors are not currently accredited by the DSA, so there might be an issue over how to establish that the private trainers who become involved have the necessary qualifications and experience to do so.

14. Interviews with stakeholders from the motorcycle industry suggested that there is some scope for involving them more in promoting and supporting Bikesafe Scotland or similar initiatives. In fact, some of the retailers interviewed were already involved in Bikesafe Scotland through customer evenings and in-store promotion. Interviews with stakeholders also suggested that there may also be some scope to negotiate discounts for Bikesafe participants with some motorcycle retailers and insurers. This could be one way of encouraging more motorcyclists from hard-to-reach groups to attend.

15. There was support among interviewees for some kind of diversionary scheme for motorcyclists, similar to the Driver Improvement schemes that operate for car drivers. However, offering Bikesafe assessed rides as an alternative to prosecution was seen as problematic since it does not involve any instruction and there are already problems with limited resources. It was also felt that offering a police-run scheme as an alternative to prosecution might be seen as a conflict of interest, and that using Bikesafe in this way might deter other motorcyclists who have not committed offences from taking part.

CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Bikesafe Scotland initiative. Bikesafe Scotland is a multi-agency initiative aimed at reducing the number and severity of crashes involving motorcyclists in Scotland and at highlighting the vulnerability of all powered two wheeled motor vehicles (TWMV). The five-year initiative was launched in 2000, and to date, the main component has been the Police Assessed Ride programme. The Assessed Ride programme involves a free on-the-road assessment of motorcycling skills from a trained Police motorcyclist in addition to theoretical advice and guidance on motorcycling skills and safety.

Background to Bikesafe Scotland

1.2 The number of motorcyclists involved in accidents each year in Scotland fell in the early 1990s but has been steadily increasing since 1997. In 2001, the number of motorcyclists injured on Scotland's roads stood at 1,174 – up from 850 in 1996.¹ The number of fatal and serious motorcycle injuries in Scotland has also risen in recent years - 453 motorcyclists were involved in fatal or serious accidents in 2001, compared with 300 in 1996.

1.3 In addition to evidence of rising casualty statistics, anecdotal evidence has highlighted the emergence of 'born again bikers' as an important development in motorcycling, both in the UK and further afield. These are motorcyclists in their late 30's and 40's who are either taking up motorcycling later in life or returning to motorcycling after a long break, often on faster and more powerful bikes than they rode when they were younger. There is some evidence that this trend is being reflected in increasing casualty figures for motorcyclists in older age groups. In 2000, there were 408 recorded accidents involving motorcyclists aged 30-39, and 175 accidents involving motorcyclists aged 40-49 – increases of 12% and 14% respectively on 1999 figures for the same age groups (based on figures from Road Accidents Scotland 2001).

1.4 The Bikesafe Scotland initiative grew out of concern at the rising numbers of motorcycle accidents in Scotland. Its basic aim is to reduce the number and severity of crashes involving motorcyclists, both locally and nationally. It also seeks to address some of the difficulties associated with the increase in 'born again bikers', by enabling these bikers to have their skills reassessed before they return to riding.

1.5 The initiative was set up by all eight Scottish Police forces in collaboration with the British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF) and the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), representatives of whom sit on the Bikesafe Scotland Working Group. Black Horse Finance (previously Lloyds UDT, a specialist provider of motorcycle finance) also provides advice and sponsorship for the initiative, and the Scottish Road Safety Campaign (SRSC) assists with publicity support.

1.6 The precise format of the scheme varies slightly between different force areas, but the main component of the initiative to date has been the Assessed Ride programme. Typically this involves a theory session, during which participants receive advice about topics including safety equipment, defensive riding, etc., followed by an assessed ride carried out by a trained

¹ Scottish Executive (2002) *Road Accidents Scotland 2001*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive National Statistics

police rider. During the assessed ride, the participant is generally followed on a set route and is then de-briefed by the police rider who will give advice, pointers and observations about the rider's ability. The participant is then sent a Bikesafe certificate to show they have taken part in the scheme. Frequently, sources of further training in the area are also recommended. Assessed Rides are carried out from April to September (the main biking season), and the number of places are limited by the availability of police motorcyclists.

1.7 Coordinated enforcement initiatives are another element of Bikesafe Scotland, whereby police forces will adopt high visibility policing in areas likely to attract a high number of motorcyclists – for example, the main routes to the Knockhill racing circuit during the Superbikes weekend.

Research aims and methods

1.8 Bikesafe Scotland is entering its fourth year in 2003, and is currently scheduled to run until the end of 2004. NFO Social Research was commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of the Bikesafe Scotland initiative in improving motorcyclists' attitudes to road safety and their riding behaviour. The evaluation is intended to provide guidance on the future format of education and publicity initiatives aimed at motorcyclists. Specific issues the research sought to address included:

- Identifying recent trends in motorcycling casualties for Scotland, including patterns in type of rider, types of roads on which accidents occur and the nature of the accident
- The impact of the Assessed Ride programme on those who participate in terms of changes in attitudes and self-reported behaviour
- Whether a voluntary scheme such as the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme can reach those motorcyclists who arguably most need advice and guidance on safer riding
- Possible improvements to the current design of the Assessed Ride programme – what lessons can be learned from the way the scheme is run in the different force areas? What suggestions would participants make for improving the form or content of the programme?
- The resources required to sustain the Bikesafe Scotland initiative beyond 2004 – the police-led Assessed Rides are manpower intensive. What are the alternatives?
- The scope for involving other stakeholders from the motorcycle industry and community in future safety initiatives aimed at motorcyclists - could they be more involved?

The evaluation consisted of five main components.

Desk-based analysis of accident statistics

1.9 Analysis of statistics from Road Accidents Scotland was carried out in order to present a more detailed picture of motorcycle accidents in Scotland. Factors considered included the age of motorcyclists involved in accidents, the type of roads on which accidents occur and the type of manoeuvres motorcyclists are carrying out when they become involved in accidents. Trends in accidents over time were also examined.

Before and after survey of 2002 Bikesafe Scotland participants

1.10 A before-and-after survey was conducted with participants who took part in the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme between June and September 2002. Self-completion questionnaires with reply-paid envelopes were distributed by police Bikesafe representatives prior to commencement of the theory session. Completed questionnaires were returned to NFO Social Research by 324 participants. Based on June-September participation figures provided by the regional Bikesafe representatives, this represents a response rate of approximately 58%². These participants were then sent a further postal questionnaire approximately three months after their participation in the theory session. Post-course questionnaires were returned by 111 respondents. The total response rate for participants returning both a pre-course and a post-course survey was therefore 34%.

1.11 The main aims of this before-and-after survey were as follows:

- to examine the characteristics of participants in the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme in terms of age, motorcycling experience, etc.
- to ascertain participants' motivation for participating in the course and to find out how they had heard about it
- to establish before and after measures of participants' self-reported riding behaviour
- to establish participants' views of the initiative and to identify any potential improvements to the course

Survey of 2001 Bikesafe Scotland participants

1.12 The third component of the evaluation involved a postal survey of people who took part in the Assessed Ride programme in 2001. The main aim of this survey was to provide some indication of riders' attitudes towards safety, risk-taking etc. some 12 months after they had completed the course. Although information about their attitudes and behaviour *before* they took the course was not available for this cohort, the hope was that comparisons with the results of the 'before' survey of the 2002 cohort would provide some broad indication of whether the scheme has an impact over the longer term. Questionnaires with reply paid envelopes were sent to 356 people who took part in 2001, whose addresses were supplied by Bikesafe representatives from the eight Scottish Police force areas. Completed questionnaires were returned by 167 people – a response rate of 47%.

In-depth interviews with police Bikesafe representatives and Bikesafe Scotland Working Group members

1.13 In-depth telephone interviews were carried out with representatives of the organisations involved in running Bikesafe Scotland. A total of 12 interviews were conducted between late August and early October 2002. Representatives from BMF, MAG and Blackhorse Finance were interviewed in addition to Bikesafe representatives from each of the

² Some police force areas were unable to provide a completely accurate record of how many people participated in theory sessions between June and September 2002. This response rate is an approximation based on the figures supplied by the police. It also assumes that all participants during this period were actually issued with questionnaires by the staff running the theory sessions.

eight Scottish Police force areas and a representative from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) Road Policing Standing Committee.

1.14 The interviews were semi-structured and the topics varied depending on the individual respondent. Key topics included: views on the strengths and weaknesses of Bikesafe Scotland, whether Bikesafe Scotland is successful in reaching key target groups (e.g. 'Born again bikers'), and options for future safety initiatives targeting motorcyclists. The interviews with police Bikesafe representatives were also used to collect details of the operation of the Bikesafe initiative in different areas of Scotland.

In-depth interviews with stakeholders from the motorcycle industry

1.15 Finally, 15 telephone interviews were carried out with various stakeholders from the motorcycle industry. These included representatives from specialist motorcycle insurance companies, alternative providers of advanced motorcycle training in Scotland and Scottish motorcycle retailers. These interviews were intended to provide information which could help to improve the marketing and profile of Bikesafe Scotland or future motorcycle safety initiatives.

1.16 Again, the topics covered varied depending on the individual respondent. Retailers and insurers were asked whether they had heard of the Bikesafe Scotland scheme and whether they promoted it to customers in any way. They were also asked whether they ever got involved in safety initiatives targeting motorcyclists, and whether they offer, or would consider offering, discounts to riders who have participated in the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme. Interviews with alternative training providers were used to assess the possibility of involving other training providers in future schemes aimed at promoting motorcycle safety.

1.17 Further details of research methods, response rates, questionnaire design etc. are included in Annex A.

Structure of the report

1.18 The report is structured as follows. Drawing primarily on data from Road Accidents Scotland 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2002), Chapter Two examines recent trends in motorcycle accidents in Scotland, looking at factors such as rider age, road-type and the type of manoeuvre involved in the accident. Chapter Three draws on interviews with police Bikesafe representatives to provide further details of the Bikesafe Scotland scheme across the eight Scottish police force areas. Chapter Four draws on findings from the pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe Scotland participants to present a profile of participants in the Assessed Ride scheme. Chapter Five draws on both the quantitative surveys of participants and the qualitative interviews with stakeholders to examine perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the Bikesafe Scotland scheme. Chapter Six assesses the impact of the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme on participants' attitudes and self-reported behaviour, based on the surveys of participants. Chapter Seven discusses issues relating to the development of Bikesafe Scotland or other motorcycle safety initiatives in the future, including who should run them and whether they should be offered as alternatives to prosecution. Finally, Chapter Eight draws some conclusions from these findings, and discusses possibilities and considerations for future initiatives and campaigns aimed at increasing the safety of motorcyclists.

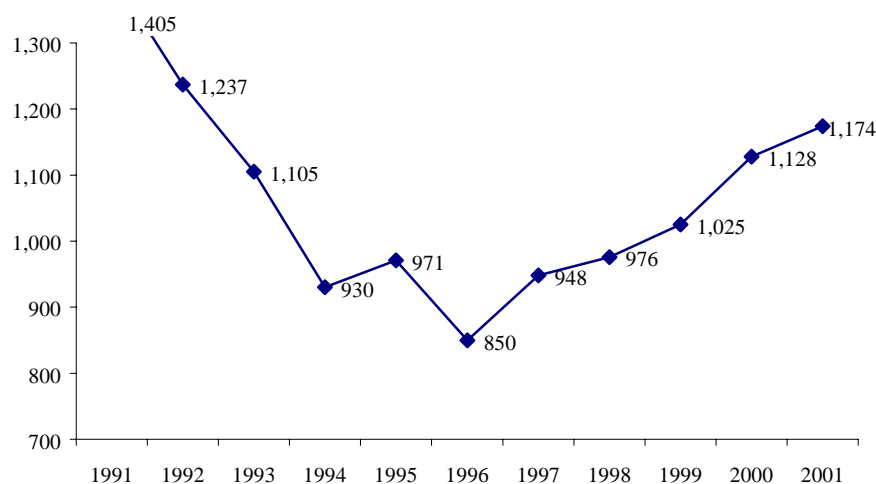
CHAPTER TWO MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENTS IN SCOTLAND AND THE UK

2.1 This chapter examines trends and patterns relating to motorcycle accidents in Scotland. It considers factors such as the age of motorcyclists involved in accidents, the type of roads on which accidents occur and the type of manoeuvres motorcyclists are carrying out when they become involved in accidents. The chapter also reviews some general trends in motorcycling in the UK, and briefly outlines elements of the UK's road safety strategy that relate specifically to motorcyclists. Unless otherwise stated, all the accident statistics presented in this chapter are taken from Road Accidents Scotland 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2002).

Motorcycle accidents in Scotland since 1991

2.2 In recent years there has been an increase in the number of motorcyclists killed or injured on Scotland's roads. Between 1990 and 1996, the number of deaths and injuries steadily declined, but from 1997 onwards the casualty figures have increased year on year. 2001 saw 1,174 motorcycle casualties in Scotland, the highest figure since 1992. Figure 2.1 shows the number of motorcyclists involved in injury accidents since 1991.

Figure 2.1: Motorcycle³ casualties in Scotland by year (number of casualties)

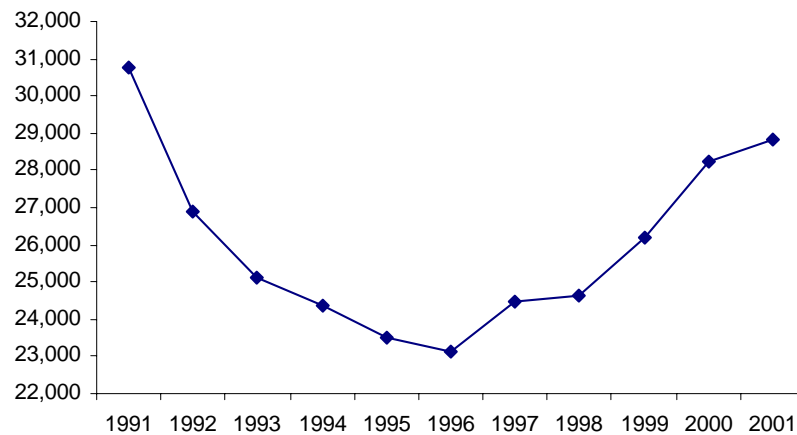


Source: Road Accidents Scotland 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2002)

2.3 A similar trend appears in the motorcycle casualty figures for the UK as a whole, as shown in Figure 2.2. While overall numbers of casualties fell until 1996, they have been increasing year on year since 1997, and in 2001 there were 28,810 motorcyclist or passenger casualties, compared with 23,133 in 1996.

³ NB the definition of "motorcycles" in Road Accidents Scotland includes all two-wheeled motor vehicles, i.e. mopeds, scooters, motorcycles and motorcycle-sidecar combinations.

Figure 2.2: Motorcycle casualties in the UK by year (number of casualties)

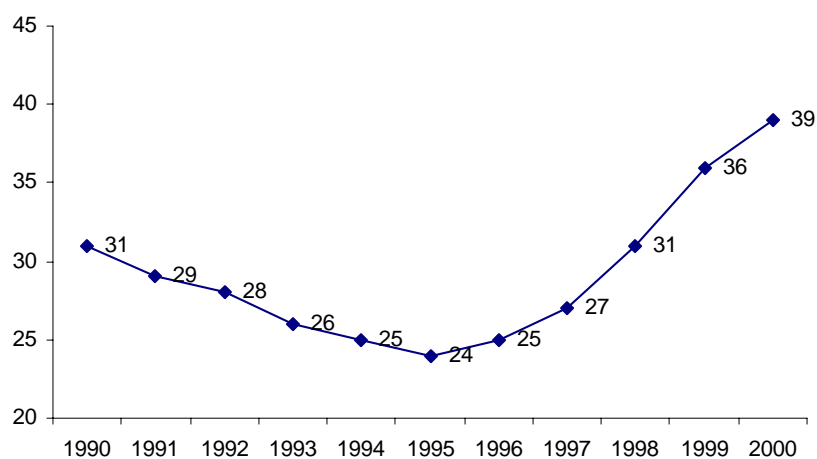


Source: Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2002 Edition (DfT, 2002)

2.4 Without figures detailing the numbers of motorcycles in Scotland and the UK and the volume of motorcycle traffic on the road, it is not possible to say whether motorcycle casualties have increased relative to the number of motorcyclists. In fact, figures from Scottish Transport Statistics 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2002) show that the number of motorcycles licenced in Scotland fell slightly in the early 1990s and then rose sharply again from 1995 (see Figure 2.3).

2.5 This may mean that the pattern of accidents shown above reflects changes in the number of motorcycles on Scotland's roads. In fact, while the number of motorcycle casualties increased by 38% from 1995 to 2000, the number of motorcycles licenced increased by 63%. This means that while the number of accidents are increasing year on year, they are not increasing at the same rate as the number of motorcycles.

Figure 2.3: Motorcycles licenced in Scotland by year (thousands)



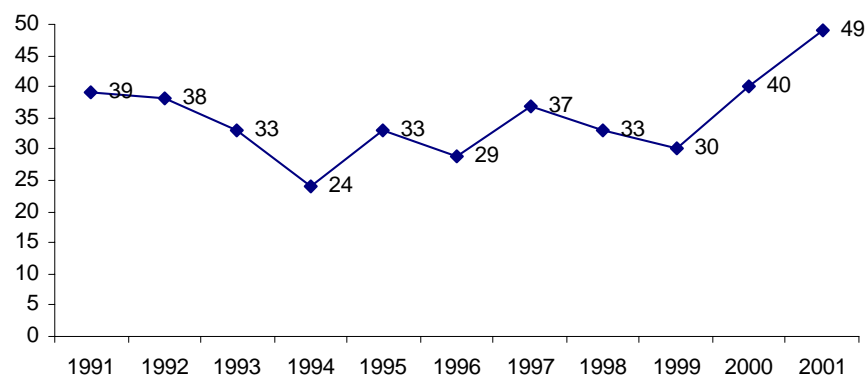
Source: Scottish Executive (2002) *Scottish Transport Statistics 2001*

2.6 In the UK as a whole, between 1989/1991 and 1999/2001, the percentage of households in Great Britain with at least one motorcycle fell from 3.5% to 2.8% (DfT, 2003). However, there has recently been an increase in motorcycle registrations and traffic, which is just starting to show in the National Travel Survey. This recent increase may go some way to explaining the higher casualty figures for motorcyclists in the UK as a whole since 1996/7.

2.7 Motorcyclists account for a high proportion of casualties relative to their numbers. According to 1999 figures from the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions, despite accounting for less than 1% of all road traffic, motorcycles are involved in 16% of the deaths and serious injuries that occur on the road in Great Britain.⁴

2.8 Figures 2.4 and 2.5 show the numbers of fatal and serious motorcycle casualties in Scotland over the last 10 years. The number of fatal and serious motorcycle casualties has also risen since the low-point of the mid-1990s. The number of deaths in 2001 (49) was 26% higher than the number 10 years earlier (39). Although the number of all fatal and serious motorcycle casualties was lower in 2001 than it was a decade ago, numbers have again been increasing steadily since a low point in 1996.

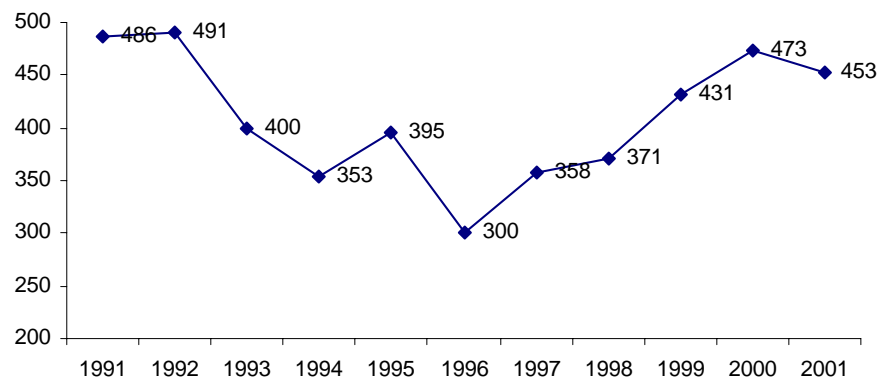
Figure 2.4: Fatal motorcycle accidents in Scotland by year (number of fatalities)



Source: Road Accidents Scotland 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2002)

⁴Spencer Broadley (2002) *Motorcycling in Great Britain*, London: DETR

Figure 2.5: Fatal and serious motorcycle accidents in Scotland by year (number of casualties)



Source: Road Accidents Scotland 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2002)

Age of motorcyclists involved in injury accidents

2.9 Several studies have suggested that motorcycling is increasingly popular amongst older males (e.g. Glamser, 1999). Many of them are returning to motorcycling in their 30s and 40s having not ridden since their youth. A number of them are beginning to ride for the first time. A study in America found that the typical buyer of a new bike was a 42 year old male, with an annual income of some \$67,000 (LA Times, 2001), while a 1998 report from the American Motorcycle Industry Council found that the median age of a motorcyclist was 38 years – up from 24 years in 1980 (MIC, 1998). Riders that fit this profile are often referred to as ‘Born Again Bikers’ or, less commonly, ‘rubies’ (rich urban bikers).

2.10 Various explanations have been put forward for this increase in older motorcyclists (see Glamser, 1999). Some associate it with a desire to participate in risk-taking activities when one’s daily life does not provide enough stimulation. Others have suggested that it is connected with growing middle-class prosperity - motorcycling is something these men have perhaps been interested in for many years, and they now have the necessary income to purchase a bike of their own.

2.11 Figures from the Scottish Executive Transport Statistics Division show that, increasingly, it is older motorcyclists who are involved in accidents. Table 2.1 shows the number of motorcyclist casualties in Scotland since 1991 by age of casualty. In 1991, it was the 16-22 age group that was involved in most motorcycle accidents in Scotland. By 2001, however, the 30-39 age group had emerged as the leading victims of motorcycle accident involvement. While 30-39 year olds accounted for just 14% of all motorcycle casualties in 1991, by 2001 they accounted for 35%. It is worth noting, however, that casualties have risen across **all** age groups since 1997 with the exception of 23-29 year olds and those aged over 60.

2.12 Similar trends have been noted in other countries. In the United States, analysis of federal statistics shows that from 1994-99, deaths among bikers aged 35 and older rose by 59%. During the same period, fatalities fell by 22% among those 34 and younger.⁵

⁵ Cited in *LA Times*, Mar 25 2001, ‘A deadly side to the baby boomers’ thrill ride’

Table 2.1: Number of motorcyclists casualties by age (number of casualties)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Ages Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
Under 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
5-11	-	2	1	2	8	3	6	6	9	2	1
12-15	12	15	19	14	17	12	10	10	8	17	21
16-22	626	441	349	259	222	182	173	177	201	222	247
23-29	449	406	395	333	295	257	257	270	209	227	197
30-39	191	220	211	181	242	261	322	333	364	408	409
40-49	69	81	85	84	122	87	128	120	154	175	208
50-59	26	45	29	36	44	28	37	37	56	54	74
60-69	25	19	11	17	14	13	11	15	20	17	11
70 +	7	8	5	4	7	7	4	6	4	4	7
All Ages	1405	1237	1105	930	971	850	948	976	1025	1128	1176

Source: data from the Scottish Executive Transport Statistics Branch, unpublished

Type of manoeuvre

2.13 Table 2.2 shows the types of manoeuvre being performed by motorcyclists at the time they become involved in accidents. Waiting and going ahead is the most common manoeuvre being performed at the time of an accident in both built-up and non built-up areas.⁶ Between 1997 and 2001 on average there were 624 accidents a year involving waiting and going ahead (401 in built up areas and 223 in non built-up areas). Accidents involving going round a bend are much more common in non-built-up areas compared with built-up areas. Between 1997 and 2001 there were an average of 188 accidents a year involving going round a bend in non-built-up areas compared with 39 in built-up areas. This emphasises the importance of cornering skills when riding on more open roads.

Table 2.2: Type of manoeuvre by built-up/non-built up roads (number of accidents – 1997-2001 average)

	Total	Built-up	Non Built-up
Reversing	3	2	1
Parked	3	2	1
Stopping	32	23	9
Starting	2	2	-
U-Turn	2	2	-
Turning/waiting turn left	20	14	6
Turning/waiting turn right	36	27	9
Changing lane	8	3	5
Overtaking	105	52	53
Going round bend	226	39	188
Waiting/going ahead	624	401	223
Total	1062	567	496

⁶ Built-up areas are defined as roads with a speed limit of up to 40mph. Roads which are in urban areas but which have a speed limit in excess of 40mph – such as motorways – are not regarded as built-up roads. Non-built up roads are those with speed limits in excess of 40mph.

Built-up and non-built-up areas

2.14 Just over half (52%) of all accidents between 1997 and 2001 occurred in built-up areas. However, a recent TRL report noted that, proportionally, motorcycle accidents in non-built-up areas are on the increase (Lynam et al, 2001). In 2001, accidents in non-built-up areas accounted for 48% of all motorcycle casualties, compared with 34% in 1991. Accidents in non-built-up areas are also more likely to be fatal or serious than accidents in built-up areas. Table 2.3 shows the numbers of fatal and serious accidents in built-up and non-built up areas over the last 10 years.

Table 2.3: Casualties by year and severity, separately for built-up and non-built up roads (number of accidents)

	Built-up			Non built-up			Total		
	Fatal	Fatal & serious	All severities	Fatal	Fatal & serious	All severities	Fatal	Fatal & serious	All severities
1991	13	238	923	26	248	482	39	486	1,405
1992	6	232	750	32	259	487	38	491	1,237
1993	6	178	645	27	222	460	33	400	1,105
1994	5	178	569	19	175	361	24	353	930
1995	6	179	530	27	216	441	33	395	971
1996	6	120	477	23	180	373	29	300	850
1997	3	130	493	34	228	455	37	358	948
1998	6	133	475	27	238	501	33	371	976
1999	5	161	517	25	270	508	30	431	1,025
2000	8	188	586	32	285	542	40	473	1,128
2001	7	159	609	42	294	565	49	453	1,174

2.15 Fatal and serious motorcycle accidents are also more likely to occur on roads with higher speed limits, reflecting the greater severity of accidents in non-built up areas. Between 1997 and 2001, an average of 30 deaths occurred each year on roads with a speed limit of 60mph, compared with 6 on 30mph roads and 2 on 70mph roads. This suggests that fatalities are most common on single carriageway ‘country’ roads.

Police force area

2.16 Figure 2.2 breaks down motorcycle casualties by the Police force area in which the accident occurred. The numbers involved are in most cases too small to analyse accident trends in individual areas. Not surprisingly, the greatest number of accidents occur in the highly populated areas of Strathclyde and Lothian and Borders.

Table 2.4: Motorcycle casualties by police force area

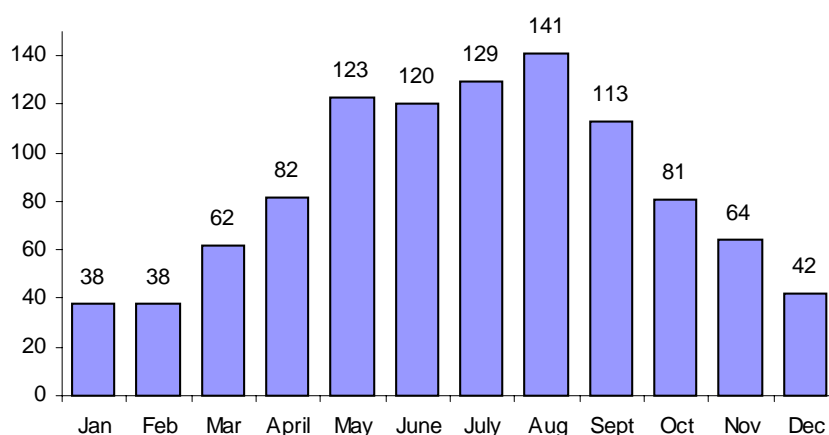
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Northern	98	109	112	64	111	96	115	108	103	107	103
Grampian	222	192	148	160	125	133	153	143	148	154	135
Tayside	123	120	122	97	67	68	78	112	115	98	109
Fife	86	69	80	58	61	54	50	47	57	85	63
Lothian Borders	311	245	209	202	232	184	189	205	216	251	273
Central	81	63	71	63	71	65	59	68	65	70	65
Strathclyde	417	373	307	254	276	213	274	260	294	320	385
Dumfries Galloway	67	66	66	32	28	37	30	33	27	43	43
Scotland	1405	1237	1105	930	971	850	948	976	1025	1128	1176

Source: Scottish Executive Transport Statistics Division, unpublished information

Time of year

2.17 Figure 2.6 shows the 1997-2001 average number of motorcycle casualties by the month of the year in which accidents occur. The pattern of accidents closely follows the motorcycle season (April to September), with the highest number of accidents occurring in the peak motorcycling month of August.

Figure 2.6: Motorcycle casualties by month, 1997-2001 average (number of casualties)



Additional factors involved in fatal motorcycle accidents

2.18 A recent report by the Transport Research Laboratory (Lynam et al, 2001) examined 717 police files of fatal accidents involving motorcycles in order to analyse contributory factors. The police files related primarily to accidents occurring between 1986 and 1995 in England and Wales.

2.19 The report found that while 41% of fatal motorcycle accidents involved collision between one or more cars and a motorcyclist, 29% involved a motorcyclist crashing without the active involvement of other road users. A further 15% involved collision with a vehicle larger than a car, while 12% involved collision with a pedestrian. Around 60% of accidents involving a car or larger vehicle were considered to be principally the fault of the

motorcyclist, while the driver of the other vehicle was considered to be principally responsible in about 40% of these collisions.

2.20 Tables 2.5 and 2.6, below, show the main precipitating factors and contributory factors in fatal accidents where the motorcyclists were judged to be principally responsible across built-up and non built-up roads. The precipitating factor is the main reason that led directly to the accident, while contributory factors are the causes of the precipitating factor. Any accident can have up to four contributory factors.

2.21 “Loss of control” was the most common precipitating factor in fatal accidents where the motorcyclists was primarily responsible. Sixty-five per cent of all fatal accidents on non built-up areas and 55% of fatal accidents on built-up roads came about as a result of the rider losing control of the vehicle. Excessive speed was a contributory factor in around a fifth of all fatal accidents, and around 15% of all fatal accidents involved some form of careless, thoughtless or reckless behaviour on the motorcyclist’s behalf.

Table 2.5: Most frequent precipitating factors in two-wheeled motor vehicle accidents where motorcyclists were judged to be principally responsible

	Non Built-up	Built-up
Loss of control of the vehicle	65%	55%
Failed to avoid a vehicle or object in carriageway	12%	22%
Poor overtaking	7%	5%
Failed to give way	4%	2%
Poor turn/manoeuvre	5%	3%
Base	250	239

Source: Lynam et al, 2001

Table 2.6: Most frequent contributory factors in two-wheeled motor vehicle accidents where motorcyclists were judged to be principally responsible

	Non Built-up	Built-up
Excessive speed	21%	22%
Careless/thoughtless/reckless behaviour	14%	16%
Lack of judgement of own path	9.3%	6.5%
Inattention	6.3%	5.5%
Impairment – alcohol	5.8%	8.0%
Inexperience of driving	5.8%	7.0%
Failure to judge other person’s path or speed	5%	5.4%
Base	605	572

Source: Lynam et al, 2001

2.22 Where loss of control of the vehicle was identified as the precipitating factor, driving conditions were examined in greater detail. The TRL report stated that “[o]ver three-quarters of the accidents occurred during fine weather on dry roads” (Lynam et al, 2001, p8). There is, therefore, no evidence for the contention that wet and slippery road surfaces are mainly responsible for riders losing control of their motorcycle.

2.23 Inexperience was highlighted as a key factor where motorcyclists hit a kerb or failed to negotiate a bend properly. Inexperienced riders also had accidents resulting from situations they came on unexpectedly because of their speed.

2.24 The main precipitating factors in accidents where the non-rider was judged mainly responsible were “failed to give way” and “poor turn/manoeuvre”. These were often linked with failure to observe satisfactorily, careless, thoughtless or reckless behaviour, or failure to judge the rider’s path or speed. These kinds of driving behaviour were highlighted in a recent DTLR TV campaign (‘Mirror’), which encourages cooperation between motorcyclists and drivers, urging them to “look out for each other”.

General trends in motorcycling in Great Britain

2.25 Two recent Department for Transport factsheets (Broadley, 2002 and DfT, 2003) highlight various trends in motorcycling in Great Britain over the last two decades which may be of relevance to the above trends in motorcycle accident statistics.

2.26 Over the last 10 years, the number of motorbikes with engine sizes of 500cc and over have risen dramatically in the period 1989-1999. In 1989, bikes of 500cc and over numbered some 131,000, or 15% of all bikes registered; by 1999, this figure had risen to 371,000, accounting for almost a half of all bikes registered. This increase occurred mainly in the latter half of the 1990s. It is worth noting that the Direct Access scheme was introduced in the UK in 1997.

2.27 The average length of a motorcycle trip has increased by two thirds from 1985/86 to 1997/1999, from 5.6 miles to 9.3 miles, and is now 10% longer than the average trip of a car driver. This may be related to the increase in ownership of more powerful bikes, since the average distance travelled in a year increases with size of bike, from 2,270 miles for motorcycles of 50cc and less to 4,290 miles a year for motorcycles of over 500cc.

UK Road Safety Strategy

2.28 In 2000, the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales launched *Tomorrows roads: safer for everyone – The Government’s safety strategy and casualty reduction targets for 2010* (DfT, 2000), which devotes an entire chapter to safer motorcycling. The joint strategy acknowledged that the casualty rate amongst motorcyclists was rising after years of steady decline, and outlined proposals for addressing this problem. Suggested actions relating to the areas of safety education and training include:

- introducing improved basic training and testing for learner motorcyclists
- introducing a separate CBT test for mopeds
- making the motorcycle theory test compulsory for all motorcyclists. Previously, holders of full car driving licences were exempt from the motorcycle theory test. This exemption ended on 1st February 2001.
- offering increased guidance offered to experienced riders, including publishing advice for people returning to motorcycling after a break and for people riding as part of their work, and
- making the registration of all motorcycle instructors statutory.

Key points

- The number of motorcyclists killed or injured on Scotland's roads fell in the early 1990s, but has increased since 1997. In 2001 there were 1,174 motorcycle casualties in Scotland – the highest number since 1992.
- Older motorcyclists, aged over 30, account for an increasing proportion of motorcycle casualties. While 30-39 year olds accounted for just 14% of all motorcycle casualties in 1991, by 2001 they accounted for 35%.
- Just over half of all motorcycle accidents between 1997 and 2001 occurred in built-up areas. However, proportionally motorcycle accidents in non built-up areas are on the increase. Motorcycle accidents in non built-up areas are also more likely to be fatal or serious than accidents in built-up areas.
- Analysis of police fatal accident reports by the Transport Research Laboratory (Lynam et al, 2001) found that “loss of control of the vehicle” was the most common precipitating factor in fatal accidents where a motorcyclist was judged to be principally responsible. Excessive speed was a contributory factor in around a fifth of accidents where a motorcyclists was responsible.
- During the 1990s, the number of motorcycles of 500cc and over increased dramatically, from 15% of all bikes registered in 1989 to almost half in 1999.
- The government's road safety strategy, produced in partnership by the DETR, Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales, outlines various measures aimed at reducing motorcycle casualties, including offering increased guidance to experienced riders and making the registration of all motorcycle instructors statutory.

CHAPTER THREE THE BIKESAFE SCOTLAND INITIATIVE

3.1 This chapter uses information provided by police representatives for the Bikesafe initiative from each of the eight Police force areas to present a more detailed picture of Bikesafe Scotland.

Participation in the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme

3.2 The Assessed Ride programme was officially launched in 2000 after pilots in Strathclyde and Grampian in 1999. Table 3.1 shows the number of participants taking part in Bikesafe in the eight Police force areas in the three years since its inception. These figures were provided by the Bikesafe representatives for each force area. Where accurate records were not available, estimates were provided.

3.3 In total, approximately 1,769 assessed rides have been carried out in the 3 years since Bikesafe Scotland started. There was a slight dip in the number carried out in 2001, but numbers increased again to around 700 in 2002.

Table 3.1: Participation in Bikesafe Scotland assessed rides by police force area (number of participants)

	2000	2001	2002	TOTAL
Lothian and Borders	116	38	110	264
Grampian	120*	120*	120*	360*
Strathclyde	77	80	250	407
Fife	87	28	92	207
Central	101	53	29	183
Dumfries and Galloway	18	20	27	65
Northern	94	63	35	192
Tayside	30*	30*	31	91*
TOTAL	643	432	694	1,769

Source: Interviews with police Bikesafe Representatives

* Where * appears next to the figure, the figure is an estimate rather than an accurate record

3.4 While the number of participants has increased year on year for Strathclyde and Dumfries and Galloway, the number of participants in other forces has either decreased or remained fairly constant. The main factor behind these differences appears to be the resources available to the forces rather than a decrease in applications. Central Scotland, for example, had one full-time and seven part-time motorcyclists when Bikesafe Scotland started in 2000. However, they are currently operating with just four part-time police riders. In contrast, Strathclyde was able to devote six police riders from a team of 30 to carrying out assessed

rides during the week between April and September 2002, which explains the much higher number of assessed rides they were able to carry out. Lothian and Borders were unable to complete all the assessed rides they had scheduled in 2001 due to increased operational commitments following the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York.

Format and content of the Assessed Ride programme

3.5 Although the basic format of theory session and police-led assessed ride is common across the eight Scottish force areas, there are variations in course content and the way the course is run between the different forces. This section provides more detail on the main components of the Assessed Ride programme, highlighting differences between the approaches of different forces where these exist.

Separate theory night or combined theory session and Assessed Ride?

3.6 In general, forces whose catchment area covers a smaller population (e.g. Fife and Northern) tend to run the theory session and assessed rides on the same day, while forces that cover a larger population (e.g. Strathclyde and Lothian and Borders) run separate theory sessions for a larger audience and then arrange assessed rides for subsequent dates. In 2002, 411 people attended Bikesafe theory evenings in Strathclyde of whom 250 went on to take an assessed ride. It may be that separate theory nights offers some economies of scale in terms of the amount of police time required to run them, although these benefits may only materialise for forces with a higher number of Bikesafe participants. However, there also appears to be some drop-off in the number of participants between the theory night and the assessed ride. The reasons for this are not clear – it may be that some participants had not scheduled their assessed rides at the time these figures were given – but it does suggest a need to weigh the potential benefits of this approach against a possible loss of participants between the two stages.

Content of the theory session

3.7 The precise content of the theory session varies from force to force. Most forces include some discussion of advanced motorcycling skills, principles for dealing with hazards, cornering, and correct positioning for different types of roads or situations. Other elements included by some forces are:

- *Discussion of safety clothing*
- *First aid tips* - In Strathclyde, Grampian and Tayside these are presented by paramedics who also show examples of the types of injuries that can be sustained if people do not wear the correct safety equipment.
- *Basic motorcycle maintenance*
- *Discussion of motorcycle accidents and their main causes* - The Strathclyde presentation includes a talk by someone who was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident about how it has affected his life. Central Scotland police show a video from Lancashire police to illustrate the types of situations in which accidents occur.
- *Discussion of attitudes to riding* - Grampian has recently changed its format slightly to focus more on the attitudinal aspects of riding as well as techniques:

Content of the Assessed Ride

3.8 The assessed ride part of the programme involves a police rider following the Bikesafe participant along a pre-set route and then offering advice, pointers and observations about the rider's technique and approach at the end of the run. This will often focus on specific skills such as cornering, road positioning, overtaking and hazard awareness. In general the route covers a mixture of built up areas and open roads. In most areas, the police rider will take the lead for a portion of the route in order that participants can observe them putting advanced riding skills into practice before their own skills are assessed.

3.9 Most forces, with the exception of Lothian and Borders, do not use any communication equipment during the assessed ride. This is partly due to their availability, and partly to avoid the perception that the assessed ride amounts to instruction or training. Police riders do not offer any instruction during assessed rides for insurance reasons – members of the public are not covered by police insurance during the ride, and if they had an accident while following instructions from a police rider they might be able to claim damages against the police. Lothian and Borders gives participants headsets so that the police rider can give a commentary on what they are doing and why as they demonstrate advanced riding skills. However, they do not give any instruction.

3.10 The ratio of participants to police riders varies between forces. Some forces have one police rider for each participant, while others operate on a 1:2 or 1:3 ratio. The length of the assessed ride also varies between forces, from around one and a half hours up to three hours.

Enforcement campaigns

3.11 Although the Assessed Ride programme has been the most prominent feature of Bikesafe Scotland to date, the initiative is intended to combine education and enforcement in tackling the increase in motorcycling accidents in Scotland.

3.12 Bikesafe representatives from each of the eight forces were asked about any enforcement initiatives in their area that target motorcyclists. They were keen to stress that police patrols target any road users who are breaking the law, not just motorcyclists. However, several forces do run increased high visibility patrols on weekends when they anticipate a large amount of motorcycle traffic – for example, the Superbikes weekend at Knockhill Racing Circuit in Fife, the Northwest 200 meet in Northern Ireland and the Scottish Motorcycle Show. Some forces use these extra patrols as a way of meeting and educating bikers, as well as for enforcement. For example, they might set up a caravan on a route which is heavily used by bikers and use static checks as an opportunity to offer advice and talk about Bikesafe with motorcyclists.

3.13 Several forces have used unmarked motorcycle patrols and unmarked video bikes (motorcycles with video recording equipment attached to the back and front) as part of their enforcement strategies in recent years. While these bikes do not specifically target motorcyclists over other road users, they have led to a number of high profile cases involving motorcyclists. In Strathclyde, unmarked sports bikes have been used in patrols. Again, the aim behind using these bikes has been to allow the police to talk to sports bike riders and show them that the police have something to offer them, in addition to using them for enforcement purposes.

Key points:

- Approximately 1,769 assessed rides have been carried out in the 3 years since the launch of Bikesafe Scotland.
- Although the number of assessed rides carried out in some force areas has declined during this period, the main reason for this appears to be resource difficulties rather than declining applications.
- Key differences between the way the Bikesafe scheme operates in different police force areas include: length of assessed rides; the ratio of police riders to participants; whether they run combined or separate theory sessions and assessed rides, and the use of communications during assessed rides. The precise content of the programme also varies between forces.
- Several forces run high visibility patrols during periods when they expect large volumes of motorcycle traffic. Some forces use extra patrols as a way of meeting and educating motorcyclists, as well as for enforcement.

CHAPTER FOUR PROFILE OF BIKESAFE SCOTLAND PARTICIPANTS

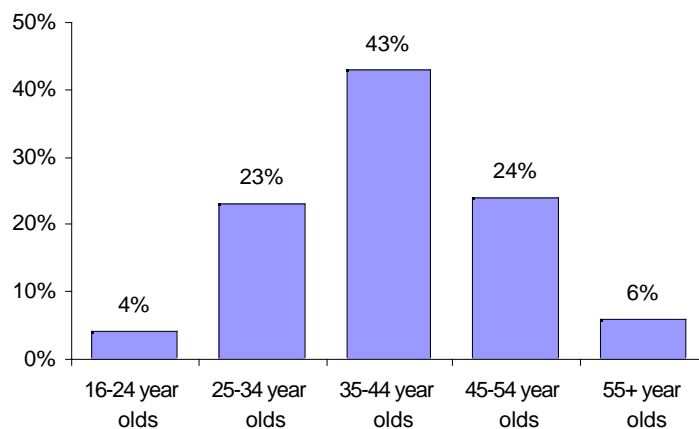
4.1 This chapter draws on findings from the pre-course survey of 2002 Assessed Ride participants to present a profile of Bikesafe Scotland participants. It examines characteristics such as age and sex, the type of bikes participants ride, their previous riding experience when they take Bikesafe, and their current patterns of riding.

4.2 A total of 324 participants who took part in the Assessed Ride programme in Scotland between June and September 2002 completed and returned questionnaires before taking part in the Bikesafe theory session. This represents a response rate of approximately 58%.

Age and sex

4.3 The vast majority (92%) of participants were male. Figure 4.1 shows the age profile of respondents. Respondents tended to be clustered in the 35-44 and 45-54 year-old age groups, suggesting that Bikesafe is attracting motorcyclists in the 'born again biker' age bracket, (although obviously these riders are not necessarily new riders or recent returners to motorcycling). As discussed above, this age group accounts for a growing proportion of motorcycle accidents.

Figure 4.1: Age of Bikesafe participants (% of respondents)



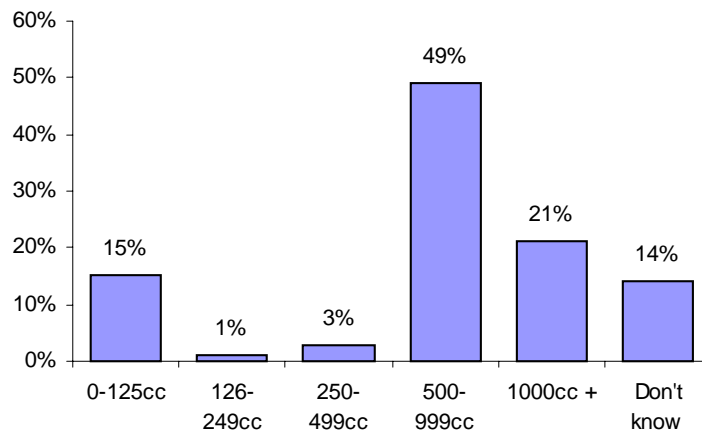
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Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

Participants' bikes and equipment

4.4 Participants were asked a number of questions about the type of bike(s) they currently ride and about the extra clothing and equipment they wear or use with their bike. Figure 4.2, below, shows the power in CCs of the bike(s) participants rode. Figure 4.2 suggests that most participants in Bikesafe ride more powerful bikes than this, with a large proportion (70%) of participants riding bikes of 500cc or over.

Figure 4.2: Power of bike(s) currently ride in CCs (% of respondents)

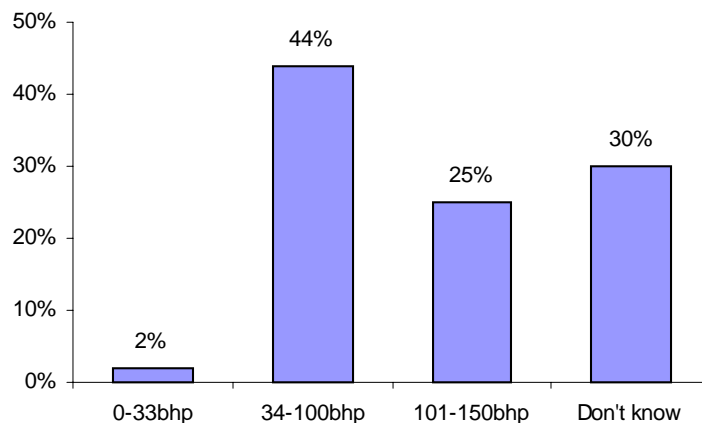


Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

4.5 Respondents were also asked about the brake horse power (BHP) of the bike they ride most often. BHP gives an indication of the speed of a bike – the higher the BHP, the faster they can go. Results are shown in Table 4.3. Again, motorcyclists who do not go through the Direct Access scheme to gain their licence are restricted to riding bikes of 33bhp or under. The average sports bike will have a BHP of around 100. Very few respondents (2%) said they had bikes of 33bhp or under, while 25% had bikes of 101-150bhp. Just under a third (30%) of respondents were not sure of the BHP of the bike they currently ride.

Figure 4.3: Brake Horse Power of bike ridden most often (% of respondents)



Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

4.6 Table 4.1 shows the type of bike respondents said they most often rode, broken down by age of respondent. The most common type was a sports-tourer (33% of respondents said they rode this type of bike most often), followed by sports bikes (27%) and all-rounders (16%). Participants aged 25-34 were more likely than participants in the older age groups to say they rode a sports bike, while participants aged 45-54 were more likely than younger participants to ride tourers.

Table 4.1: Type of bike ride most often (% of respondents)

	16-24 year olds	25-34 year olds	35-44 year olds	45-54 year olds	55+ year olds	TOTAL
Sports-tourer	31	27	36	34	40	33
Sports bike	31	52	24	14	5	27
All-rounder	31	10	20	13	20	16
Tourer		4	11	25	20	13
Custom/classic		1	8	12	15	7
Scooter Mart	8	1	1			1
Off-road Mart						
Don't know/not stated		4	1	1		2
Base	13	73	140	77	20	324

Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

4.7 The pre-course questionnaire included a question which listed different kinds of motorcycle clothing, equipment and accessories participants might wear or use. Some of these items are designed to protect riders (e.g. gloves with knuckle/palm guard), while others are designed to enhance the performance of bikes or the speed at which they can be ridden (e.g. racing exhaust for use on the road). Some are illegal (e.g. helmets with illegally tinted visor), while others are designed to help motorcyclists avoid detection by speed cameras (e.g. flash photography resistant plates).

4.8 Table 4.2 shows the kinds of items respondents indicated they do wear or use. Respondents' answers to this question were also analysed to see how many respondents indicated that they wore any items of protective clothing, how many wore items of unsafe extra clothing, and how many had made one of the listed modifications to their bikes. The vast majority of respondents (95%) wore some type of protective clothing, while a third (33%) wore some kind of unsafe extra clothing (e.g. open face helmet). Seventeen per cent had made some sort of modification to their bike that could be classed as unsafe or illegal, or that could be used to help the rider avoid detection for speeding.

Table 4.2: Type of clothing, equipment and accessories worn or used (% of respondents)

ITEM	%
Jacket with reinforced padding/armour on the elbow, shoulders or back	90
Boots with reinforced padding/armour on the ankle, knee or shin	84
Trousers with reinforced padding/armour on the knee, outer knee or hip	82
Gloves with knuckle/palm guard	69
Separate or extra protective armour for back, elbows, shoulder, knees, outer knees, hip or other area	21
Knee sliders	19
Helmet with illegally tinted visor	18
Racing exhaust for use on the road	12
Licence plates that are smaller than the legal minimum size	7
Open face helmet	5
Speed trap detector	2
Flash photography resistant places	*
None of the above	2
Don't know/not stated	3

Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

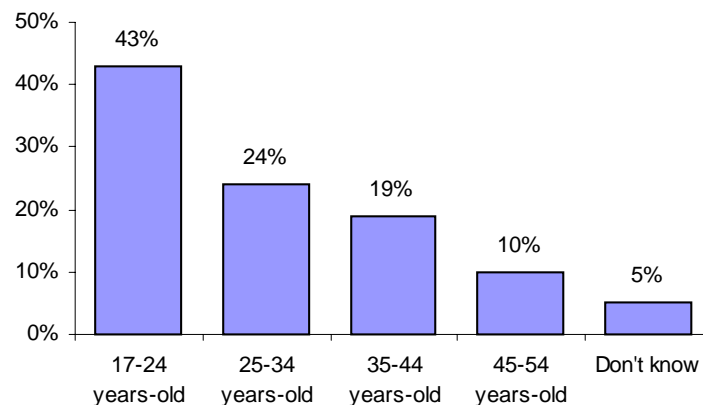
Biking history

4.9 Respondents were asked a series of questions about their biking experiences, from passing their test onwards. Among other things, these questions were designed to find out what proportion of Bikesafe participants gained their licence through the Direct Access Scheme and what proportion of participants could be classed as ‘born again bikers’.

4.10 A significant proportion (43%) of participants had gained their licence through the Direct Access scheme, allowing them to ride a bike of any size immediately after passing their test.

4.11 Figure 4.4 shows the age at which respondents first obtained a full motorcycle licence. While 43% of respondents obtained a full licence when they were aged between 17 and 24 years-old, 19% were 35-44 years-old and 10% were 45-54 years-old. This suggests that some participants have taken up motorcycling later on in life, and may therefore be classed as ‘born again bikers’.

Figure 4.4: Age when obtained full motorcycle licence (% of respondents)



Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

4.12 Table 4.3 indicates that overall, 31% of respondents indicated that they had gone periods of a year or more without riding a bike since passing their test. Respondents aged over 35 were significantly more likely than respondents aged under 35 to indicate that this was the case, which suggests that these respondents may be ‘born again bikers’ who returned to biking later in life.

Table 4.3: Which of the following statements best describes respondent (% of respondents)

	16-24 year olds	25-34 year olds	35-44 year olds	45-54 year olds	55+ year olds	TOTAL
“I have regularly ridden a bike since passing my test (e.g. for at least 5 months a year)”	77	78	60	56	45	63
“I have gone periods of a year or more without riding since passing my test”	0	11	35	43	55	31
Don't know/not stated	23	11	5	1	0	6

Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

4.13 Respondents who indicated they had gone a year or more without riding a bike since passing their test (n = 102) were asked how many years they went without riding a bike regularly. Over half (58%) had a gap of 10 years or more where they did not ride a bike regularly, while a further 12% did not ride a bike regularly for between 6 and 9 years.

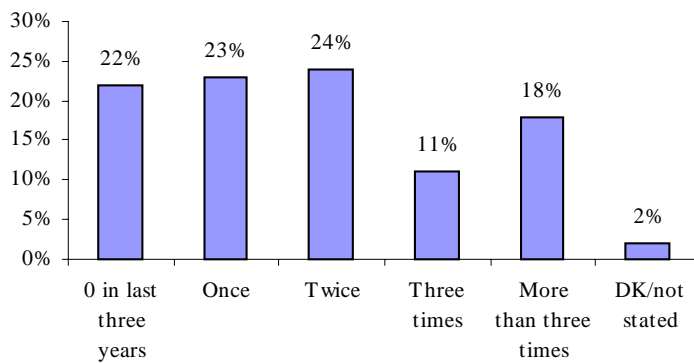
4.14 In order to provide an indication of how recently they returned to riding, these respondents were also asked how long it was since the last full year in which they did not ride a bike. Almost two thirds (65%) of these respondents indicated that between 0 and 5 years had elapsed since the last full year in which they did not ride a bike. This suggests that around a fifth of Bikesafe Scotland participants may be relatively recent returners to riding.

Accident involvement and ‘near misses’

4.15 The majority of pre-course respondents (79%) had not had any accidents while riding a motorbike in the last three years. Fifteen per cent had had one accident, while 6% had been involved in two or more accidents. Since only 59 respondents in total indicated that they had been involved in an accident in the past three years, detailed analysis of accident type was not possible. However, among those who had been in an accident, the most common type of accident was one where they came off their bike while in motion, mentioned by 27 of the 59 respondents. Around three in ten respondents who had been involved in accidents said someone had sustained a serious injury as a result of an accident they were involved in.

4.16 Near misses, where respondents felt they only just avoided having an accident or losing control of their bike, were more prevalent than accidents among pre-course respondents. Figure 4.5 shows the number of ‘near misses’ respondents indicated they had in the past three years. Just 22% of respondents indicated that they had not had any ‘near misses’ in the last three years.

Figure 4.5: Number of times in last three years have had a ‘near miss’, when felt only just avoided having an accident or losing control of your bike (% of respondents)



Base: 324

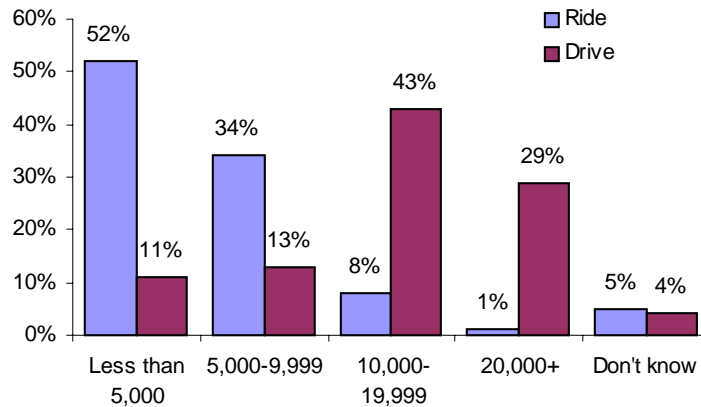
Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

4.17 Just 8% of respondents said they had been flashed by a speed camera one or more times in the last three years, while 18% of respondents had been stopped by the police at least once in the last three years while riding their bike.

Current patterns of riding

4.18 Figure 4.6 shows the estimated number of miles participants rode each year, compared with the estimated number of miles driven in a car or van each year by respondents with a full car driving licence. While 72% of respondents with a full car licence drive 10,000 or more miles a year, only 9% of participants said they rode 10,000 or more miles a year, suggesting that people generally travel less far on motorbikes than in cars, at least on a yearly basis. This is perhaps not surprising, since many motorcyclists only ride their bikes in the spring and summer months (the motorcycling season is usually seen as running from April to September).

Figure 4.6: Number of miles ride each year compared with miles drive each year (% of respondents)

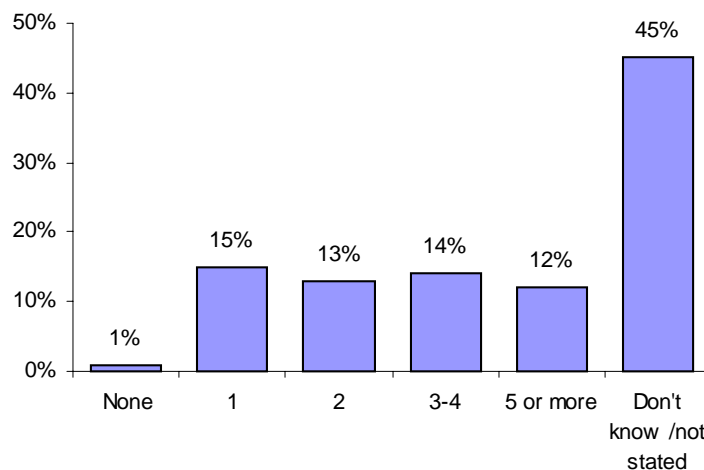


Base: Ride = 324, Drive = 279 (all respondents with full car driving licence)

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

4.19 In comparison with car driving, motorcycling is a hobby for many people and is often a social activity. Figure 4.7, below, indicates the number of other bikers respondents said they generally ride with. Over half (54%) said they generally ride with at least one other biker. A large proportion of respondents (45%) either did not know how many other riders they usually ride with or did not answer this question. These other riders were most commonly respondents' friends, mentioned by 45% of those who rode with other bikers. Nineteen per cent of respondents indicated they rode with relatives or family members, and 14% said they rode with members of motorcycle clubs.

Figure 4.7: Number of other bikers generally ride with (% of respondents)



Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

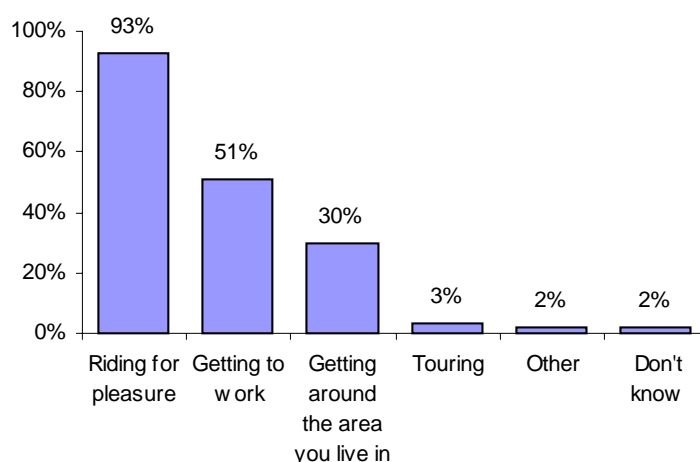
4.20 Just under a quarter (22%) of respondents indicated that they were a member of a motorcycle group or organisation. The most commonly mentioned organisation respondents belonged to was the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), mentioned by 21% of the 71

respondents who did belong to a group. This was followed by regional or local motorcycle clubs (20%), motorcycle ‘brand’ owners clubs like BMW (20%) and the British Motorcyclists Federation (14%).

4.21 Respondents were also asked how often they carried a pillion passenger. Sixty-nine per cent of respondents said they carried a pillion passenger at least some times, while 18% said they carried one frequently and 3% said they carried a passenger nearly all the time.

4.22 Figure 4.8 shows the types of things respondents said they used their bikes for. Their answers total to more than 100% since respondents could indicate as many different uses as applied to them. The vast majority used their bikes for pleasure riding, reflecting the fact that biking is generally seen as a hobby as well as a practical form of transport. Just over half (51%) used their bikes for getting to work, while only 30% used their bikes for getting around the area they lived in.

Figure 4.8: Types of things respondents used their bike for (% of respondents)



Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

4.23 Table 4.4 shows how often respondents use motorcycles for any kind of journey, compared with how often they use buses or cars. While 37% of respondents use motorbikes ‘most days’, this compares with 72% of respondents who use cars or vans most days, suggesting that for many motorcyclists their motorbike is not their main form of transport.

Table 4.4: How often respondents use different sorts of transport for any journey (% of respondents)⁷

	Most days	Once or twice a week	About once a fortnight	About once a month	Several times a year	About once a year or less	Never	Don't know /not stated
Motorbike	37	48	9	1	2	0	2	2
Car or van	72	20	3	1	2	0	1	2
Bus	2	2	4	3	14	17	49	10

Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

⁷ NB as a result of rounding, the row percentages here total 101% rather than 100%.

Key points:

- The vast majority of Bikesafe Scotland participants are male and 67% fall into the 35-44 and 45-54 year-old age groups. This coincides with the age group accounting for growing numbers of accidents.
- Around 70% of respondents to the pre-course survey of 2002 participants rode bikes of over 500cc. Forty-three per cent had gained their motorcycle licence through the Direct Access scheme, which allows riders to ride a bike of any size once they pass their test.
- The vast majority of respondents (95%) wore some items of protective clothing while riding. However, 33% wore some kind of unsafe extra clothing and 17% had made some sort of modification to their bike that might be classed as unsafe or illegal, or that could be used to help the rider avoid detection for speeding.
- 29% of respondents were aged 35 or older when they obtained a full motorcycle licence. Around a fifth of all respondents had returned to riding in the last five years after a break in riding of a year or more. This suggests that Bikesafe is attracting some riders who might be classed as 'born again' bikers.
- Most respondents used their bikes less often than they used cars or vans, suggesting that for many their motorbike is not their main form of transport. Most participants stated that they used their bike for riding for pleasure (93%), while half used it for getting to work.
- Motorcycling is a social activity – 54% of participants generally ride with at least one other rider, and 22% of respondents indicated that they were a member of a motorcycle group or organisation.

CHAPTER FIVE VIEWS ON THE BIKESAFE SCOTLAND ASSESSED RIDE PROGRAMME

5.1 This chapter draws on both the quantitative findings from the surveys of participants and the qualitative interviews with stakeholders to discuss their views on the Assessed Ride Programme. It begins by discussing how participants heard about Bikesafe and what their reasons were for taking part, before discussing how useful they say they found the scheme. It goes on to discuss stakeholders' views of the main strengths and weaknesses of Bikesafe Scotland based on the in-depth phone interviews with key stakeholders.

Participants' reasons for becoming involved in Bikesafe Scotland

5.2 Table 5.1 below shows how respondents heard about Bikesafe Scotland, based on the pre-course survey of 2002 participants. The most common responses were from a stall at a motorcycle event (mentioned by 27%) and through word of mouth (23%). A fifth had heard about Bikesafe through a police officer or at a police station.

Table 5.1: How heard about Bikesafe (% of respondents)

Stall at a motorcycle event	27
Word of mouth	23
From a police officer/at a police station	19
Newspaper advert	17
Picked up a leaflet	10
Through a motorcycle club/group	5
Saw poster	2
Radio	2
E-mail	2
Other	2
Don't know/not stated	2

Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

5.3 The most commonly mentioned reasons for taking part in the Assessed Ride scheme are shown in Table 5.2. Eighty-five per cent of respondents said they wanted to improve safety while riding, 83% wanted to improve riding skills generally, 71% wanted to gain professional advice and 65% wanted to assess/improve on bad habits.

Table 5.2: Reasons decided to take part in Assessed Ride programme (% respondents)⁸

To improve safety while riding	85
To improve riding skills generally	83
To gain professional advice	71
To assess/improve on bad habits	65
To improve road awareness	64
To become a smoother rider	51
To improve confidence	51
Curiosity	26
Because it's a long time since I passed my test	20
Because a friend recommended it	11
Because I have had an accident while biking	7
Because someone I know has had an accident while biking	5
Other	3
Don't know/not stated	1

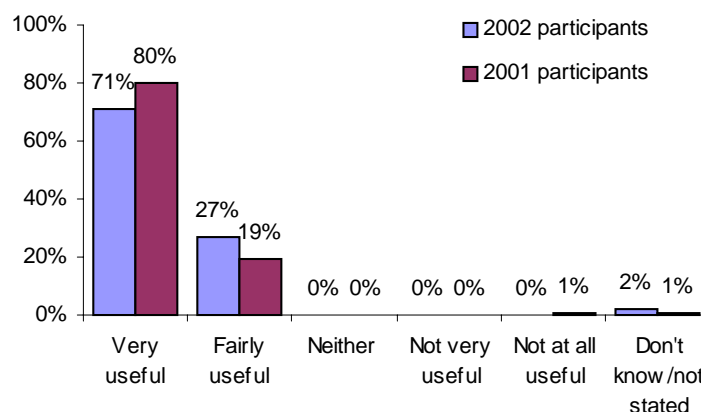
Base: 324

Source: Pre-course survey of 2002 Bikesafe participants

Participants' views of the Assessed Ride programme

5.4 The vast majority of respondents thought that Bikesafe was either 'very' or 'fairly' useful, as shown by Figure 5.1, below. Just 1% of respondents to the survey of 2001 participants said they did not find it at all useful.

Figure 5.1: How useful found Bikesafe (% of respondents)



Bases: 2002 = 111, 2001 = 167

Source: Post-course survey of 2002 participants and survey of 2001 participants

5.5 In order to assess participants' views of different aspects of the Assessed Ride programme, they were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements about Bikesafe. Responses from both the 2002 post-course survey and the survey of 2001 participants are shown in Table 5.3, below.

⁸ The totals sum to more than 100 as respondents could give more than one answer to this question.

Table 5.3: Level of agreement with statements about Bikesafe (% of respondents)⁹

	Strongly agree		Agree		No opinion		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001
I would recommend the Bikesafe scheme	88	90	12	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
The assessed ride took just the right amount of time	16	13	59	60	5	4	20	20	0	1
All bikers should be encouraged to go on the Bikesafe scheme	76	72	22	26	2	0	0	1	1	0
The Bikesafe scheme did not cover all the things I expected it to	2	1	21	11	9	13	54	58	14	16
The Bikesafe scheme was too theoretical	1	1	2	2	3	7	69	68	25	22
The assessed ride was not long enough for me to learn much	0	4	16	18	11	10	60	56	13	10
The assessed ride was not done on the kind of roads I usually ride on	2	2	10	5	8	4	57	60	23	27
Insurance premiums should be lower for people who have undertaken Bikesafe	53	51	26	33	11	12	8	4	2	1

Bases: 2002 = 111, 2001 = 167

Sources: Post-course survey of 2002 participants and Survey of 2001 participants

5.6 Again, the results suggest that respondents were very satisfied with many elements of the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme. A hundred per cent of respondents to the 2002 post-course survey and 98% of respondents to the 2001 survey ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they would recommend the scheme. Ninety-eight per cent of respondents to both surveys ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that all bikers should be encouraged to go on the Bikesafe scheme.

5.7 Respondents were slightly less likely to agree with the statement “The assessed ride took just the right amount of time” – 20% of respondents to the 2002 post-course survey and 21% of respondents to the 2001 survey ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with this statement. Correspondingly, 16% of respondents to the 2002 post-course survey and 22% of respondents to the 2001 survey ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that “the assessed ride was not long enough for me to learn much”. These findings suggest that while, overall, respondents found the assessed ride very useful, it might be more useful for some participants if more time was devoted to the assessed rides. This finding is supported by the comments of some stakeholders, as discussed below.

5.8 Table 5.3 also shows that 23% of respondents to the 2002 post-course survey ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that “The Bikesafe scheme did not cover all the things I expected it to”. The most commonly mentioned subjects not covered in the assessed ride from both surveys are shown in Table 5.4, below. These included filtering through slow traffic or performing low speed manoeuvres, riding in bad or wet weather or riding at night, riding in towns or on busier roads and motorway riding. Some respondents again suggested the assessed ride was too short. However, 56% of respondents to the 2001 survey and 65% of respondents to the

⁹ NB these statements did not appear in the questionnaire in this order. Rather, negative statements were interspersed with positive statements.

2002 post-course survey did not mention anything that was not covered in the Assessed Ride but which they thought would have been useful.

Table 5.4: Subjects not covered in the Assessed Ride which would have been useful (% of respondents)

	2001	2002
Filtering through slow traffic/low speed manoeuvres	8	3
Wet weather/bad weather conditions/riding at night	7	8
More riding in town/busier roads	7	5
Motorway riding	5	4
Assessed ride was too short	4	5
What safety checks to do on bike/importance of clearing/maintenance of bike/importance of good clothing	4	3
Emergency/heavy breaking	2	3
Other	7	5
Don't know/not stated	56	65

Base: 2002 = 111, 2001 = 167

Sources: Post-course survey of 2002 participants and Survey of 2001 participants

5.9 Table 5.5, below, shows the elements of Bikesafe that respondents found the *most* useful. The most commonly mentioned answers in both surveys were traffic awareness/looking ahead/reading roads correctly and the assessed ride. The safety talk and information/advice on cornering were also valued by respondents.

Table 5.5: Elements of Bikesafe which were most useful (% of respondents)¹⁰

	2001	2002
Traffic awareness/looking ahead/reading the roads correctly	31	32
Assessed Ride	31	27
Cornering	15	14
Safety talk	12	15
All of it	8	3
Paramedic presentation	4	3
The professionalism of the tutors	4	5
Other	4	2
Don't know/not stated	9	15

Base: 2002 = 111, 2001 = 167

Sources: Post-course survey of 2002 participants and Survey of 2001 participants

Stakeholders' views - the strengths of Bikesafe Scotland

5.10 In-depth interviews were carried out with various stakeholders, including the eight area police Bikesafe representatives, representatives from other organisations involved in running Bikesafe (MAG, BMF, Black Horse Finance and ACPOS), six providers of alternative (i.e. non-Bikesafe) motorcycle training in Scotland, seven motorcycle retailers based in Scotland and two specialist motorcycle insurers.

5.11 The Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme received wide support from all types of respondents in the qualitative interviews. Most of the retailers, insurers and other

¹⁰ NB respondents could give more than one answer to this question, so the figures do not necessarily total 100%.

trainers interviewed expressed the opinion that anything that promotes motorcycle safety and encourages motorcyclists to think about their riding is a good thing. Aspects of Bikesafe Scotland that were identified as particular strengths are outlined below.

Free of charge

5.12 Many interviewees commented on the fact that the Assessed Ride programme is free to participants. While arguably cost would not *prohibit* the majority of motorcyclists from taking part in further training (since they can afford to own and run a motorcycle), it was suggested that it would still deter some riders. A regional police Bikesafe representative noted that some forces in England were involved in The Edge, a motorcycle training scheme supported by the motorcycle industry. The Edge also offered rider assessments (discontinued, as of December 2002) similar to Bikesafe Scotland, but at a cost to the participant.

“One of the benefits of Bikesafe, and I wouldn’t want to see that change, is that it’s free, and I think that’s a great attraction for people. I know South of the border a lot of forces have now got involved in The Edge. (...) But there is a cost to people (...) and it may seem good value but it’s basically the same as what we’re doing for nothing. And as I say I really don’t want to move away from the fact it’s going to cost people money, because there are some who will just say ‘No, I’m not going to pay that’.”

Run by the police

5.13 Police riders are widely seen as experts in the field of motorcycling. It was suggested that many Bikesafe participants enjoy being assessed by specialist police riders and may be more willing to take criticism from them than from civilian motorcyclists. The involvement of police riders was seen as an important part of the schemes’ attraction by representatives from motorcycle organisations and several alternative training providers, as well as by some police Bikesafe representatives.

“The people who attend it are delighted to be out there being followed by a police bike with all the police signs, blue lights and all that kind of thing. It gives them all a buzz (...) The police rider is a really positive move. At one time I suggested that we maybe have some advanced trainers trying to help with the backlog (...) but we all agreed that that would take the main buzz out of it because it wouldn’t be the police doing it.”
(representative, BMF)

Improving relations between the police and motorcyclists

5.14 Most of the regional police Bikesafe representatives, in addition to several other respondents from the motorcycle community, suggested that Bikesafe Scotland had been very effective in improving relations between the police and the motorcycle community. The initiative is seen as demonstrating that the police are not only interested in enforcement but have something else to offer motorcyclists. The breaking down of barriers between the police and motorcyclists was widely seen as a positive outcome of Bikesafe, particularly among the police representatives.

“When they see that we’re not just preaching to them, we’re not just out trying to beat them with a big stick, we’re trying to think of alternatives, people come round to our way of thinking.”
(regional police Bikesafe representative)

5.15 However, it is worth noting that one motorcycle retailer was more sceptical about the police’s motives in launching Bikesafe Scotland. They suggested that the police want to be *seen* to be doing something about motorcycle awareness, but in reality Bikesafe is more a political gesture than a practical proposition, since the police have in fact been unable to cope with the response to Bikesafe. This suggests that the continued success of Bikesafe in building bridges with the motorcycle community is dependent on maintaining or reinforcing the perception that there is a genuine commitment to the objectives of Bikesafe Scotland, backed by appropriate resources.

Additional strengths

5.16 Additional strengths identified by interviewees included:

- the perception that Bikesafe does act as a starting point for encouraging motorcyclists to think about their riding skills
- the collaborative approach to motorcycle enforcement and education adopted by the Scottish police forces - a representative from MAG suggested that although Bikesafe operates slightly differently in each force area, the approach of the Scottish forces in working together to tackle motorcycle safety is praised by many police in the rest of the UK
- the contribution of Bikesafe to accident reduction - several respondents suggested that Bikesafe was having some effect on the accident involvement of Scottish motorcyclists. Although there is little evidence for this in terms of overall accident statistics, since the number of accidents involving motorcyclists in Scotland have gone up not down since Bikesafe Scotland began in 1999 (see Chapter Two), it was suggested by interviewees that Bikesafe does help those who participate in it become safer riders – for example, only one motorcyclist killed in Lothian and Borders in the last 3 years had taken part in Bikesafe. However, the numbers of Bikesafe participants were seen as too small to have an impact on overall casualty figures – in 2000, there were 39,000 motorcycles registered in Scotland, while only around 1,800 motorcyclists have taken part in Bikesafe since it started in 2000.

Stakeholders’ views - problems with Bikesafe Scotland

5.17 Respondents to the qualitative interviews were also asked what they saw as the main difficulties with the Bikesafe Scotland scheme and where they thought there were areas for improvement.

Resources

5.18 Resources were identified as a major problem for Bikesafe Scotland, both by police Bikesafe representatives and other stakeholders. The Assessed Ride programme is clearly resource intensive in terms of police time, and in most forces the police are running Bikesafe in addition to carrying out full-time operational duties with no extra manpower or resources.

Representatives from several force areas noted that they had been forced to scale back or cancel assessed rides in recent years due to a lack of resources. All the police Bikesafe representatives interviewed felt that any further expansion or improvement to the scheme would be extremely difficult without extra resources.

5.19 Lack of resources was also perceived as a problem by other stakeholders and interested parties, who suggested that it led to Bikesafe being unreliable, underpublicised and under-utilised. It was argued that cancelling assessed rides put people off participating, while the assessed rides themselves would be more useful if the police could devote more time to running them – perhaps taking people out for a whole day. One retailer thought that Bikesafe seemed to happen sporadically depending on what the police decided to prioritise, and argued for a more consistent approach.

Publicity

5.20 Each police force in Scotland is currently responsible for publicising the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme in their area. Publicity strategies currently employed by the various forces include: displaying leaflets and posters in local motorcycle dealers; sending press releases to local papers or radio stations; recruiting people through police patrols by talking to motorcyclists about Bikesafe; setting up caravans at key meeting places for motorcyclists or at motorcycle events; and attending customer evenings at local dealers. Word of mouth was also identified as an important means of encouraging people to attend (as confirmed by the quantitative findings on p31, above), and interviews with retailers and alternative training providers suggested that many of them did pass on information about Bikesafe Scotland to their customers and colleagues.

5.21 However, although the police do take steps to attract motorcyclists to Bikesafe Scotland, there was a widespread recognition that it could be better publicised. Several retailers suggested that their customers were not aware of Bikesafe Scotland while their own knowledge of the scheme was very limited. Police Bikesafe Scotland representatives were aware of this problem, but they suggested that further publicity could lead to them becoming “victims of their own success”, since with limited resources they could not cope with a big increase (or, in some cases, any increase) in demand for assessed rides.

“We could sell it more, but the more we sell it, the more we advertise, I think we could end up finding ourselves snowed under and not being able to handle the response.”

(Police Bikesafe Scotland representative)

5.22 This tension was recognised by some interviewees from outside the police force. The Scottish representative for MAG suggested that they haven’t really publicised Bikesafe Scotland that much since the initial stage of the scheme, since news of the Assessed Ride programme has been spread by word of mouth and several schemes are now over-subscribed.

A ‘stepping stone’ to further training?

5.23 The Bikesafe Assessed Ride programme is not intended to provide participants with advanced training – rather, it involves an assessment of their current riding and some guidance on what they need to improve in order to become better riders. The police who run

the scheme encourage participants to go on to take further training, and in some cases they hand out lists of providers of advanced training in the local area.

5.24 However, although the assessed ride is intended as a ‘taster’ to encourage motorcyclists to go on and take more advanced training, several of the police Bikesafe representatives noted that participants do not always see it this way:

“Quite a few people, when they’re asked ‘have you considered advanced training?’ have said ‘I’ve already done my day with the police’.”
(Police Bikesafe Scotland representative)

5.25 In Strathclyde, this potential difficulty is addressed by inviting representatives of other organisations who offer advanced motorcycle training to attend Bikesafe Scotland presentations, giving them the opportunity to talk to participants directly about advanced training. The Bikesafe organiser also asks participants to indicate on their assessment form for the course if they would like their names to be passed to advanced training providers. This allows these organisations to take pro-active steps to follow-up Bikesafe participants, rather than leaving it to the individual to access further training themselves.

5.26 Of the 7 alternative providers of motorcycle training interviewed for this study, 3 said they had had clients who came to them after taking part in Bikesafe Scotland, while one said they had received enquiries from Bikesafe Scotland participants but the cost of taking advanced training had put them off.

5.27 Overall, around a third of 2002 Bikesafe Scotland participants who returned a post assessed ride questionnaire say their Bikesafe assessor suggested they should undertake further training. This is a slightly higher proportion than in 2001, where a fifth of respondents said their assessor had suggested they undertake further training. All participants in Bikesafe Scotland should be told something about further training during their course. However, these findings suggest that a large proportion of participants are not taking away a clear message that they should take further training after Bikesafe. Further, it may be that they are taking away the message, intended or not, that their riding is fine now they have taken part Bikesafe Scotland. This suggests that the advanced training message could be better promoted by Bikesafe Scotland organisers.

5.28 Around a quarter of 2002 participants say the assessor suggested they undertake Advanced Motorcycle training or Institute of Advanced Motorcycle training. In just under four per cent of cases, the instructor suggested Motorcycle Appreciation courses and for two per cent, some other form of training was suggested.

5.29 Around three quarters of those who were advised to undertake further training say it is likely that they will do so. Just under a fifth say they don’t know whether or not they will and 6% say it is unlikely they will do so. Training being too expensive was the reason given for being unlikely to take part in further training.

Reaching ‘target groups’

5.30 Although Bikesafe Scotland was initially devised partly in response to the emergence of ‘born again bikers’, several interviewees identified other key groups they felt Bikesafe should be targeting. In particular, sports bike riders, who ride powerful ‘superbikes’ designed

for speed and quick maneuvering, were identified by many of the police representatives as an important target group. They were seen as particularly at risk of accident because of the power and speed of their bikes. Motorcyclists who gained their licences through the Direct Access scheme were also seen as an important group for motorcycle safety initiatives. Many respondents, especially police representatives and alternative training providers, expressed concern over the impact of the Direct Access scheme on motorcycle casualties. It was suggested that allowing people to ride bigger, faster bikes on the open road before they have built up experience and control on a smaller bike will inevitably lead to more accidents.

5.31 In general it was suggested that Bikesafe Scotland is quite successful in attracting ‘born again bikers’, particularly those who are members of BMF or other motorcycle clubs. This suggestion would appear to be supported by findings from the quantitative surveys – 67% of respondents to the 2002 pre-course survey were aged 35 or older, while 31% of respondents said they had gone periods of a year or more without riding since passing their test. The surveys also suggest that Bikesafe is successful in attracting people who gained their licence through the Direct Access scheme – 43% of respondents to the 2002 pre-course survey obtained their licence in this way.

5.32 However, in spite of this there was a widespread perception among stakeholders that Bikesafe tends to be “preaching to the converted”, in that participants are the kind of motorcyclists who would take further training on their own initiative anyway. Bikesafe was seen as less successful in attracting sports bike riders of any age. It was suggested that sports bike riders in general tend to be very suspicious of the police and are deterred from attending Bikesafe because of this. Although findings from the quantitative surveys of participants suggest that in fact, Bikesafe is attracting some sports bike riders (27% of respondents to the 2002 pre-course survey rode sports bikes), there may still be a case for focusing more on this target group if they are seen as particularly vulnerable.

5.33 Several forces have advertised at track days or attended themselves in an attempt to persuade sports bike riders to come to Bikesafe. This was met with some success. However, a representative from the BMF noted that although attending track days was a very effective way of breaking down barriers, it was resource intensive in terms of taking police motorcyclists away from operational duties (or asking them to go in their spare time). Effective targeting of sports bike riders may, therefore, require extra resources to be devoted to this.

5.34 Thames Valley Police has attempted to target sports bike riders by enlisting the support of Troy Bayliss, British Superbikes champion, in producing a Bikesafe training video. The video is distributed through sports bike dealers free with the purchase of a high performance bike.

Key points

- Almost 100% of respondents to the surveys said that they found the Bikesafe Scotland assessed ride programme ‘very’ or ‘fairly useful’, and the vast majority ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they would recommend the scheme and that all bikers should be encouraged to go on it.
- There was some suggestion that the assessed ride was not long enough however. A fifth of respondents ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statement “the assessed ride

took just the right amount of time”, while a similar proportion ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that it “was not long enough to learn much”.

- Qualitative interviewees highlighted the fact that Bikesafe Scotland is free, that it is run by the police and that it has improved relations between the police and the motorcycling community as key strengths of Bikesafe.
- A lack of resources was identified as a major problem for Bikesafe Scotland. This in turn made improving publicity to attract greater numbers difficult.
- Concerns were also expressed about whether Bikesafe encourages participants to take further training, and whether it is successful in reaching key target groups. While it was suggested that Bikesafe does attract ‘born again bikers’, it was seen as less successful in attracting sports bike riders. Although 27% of respondents to the 2002 pre-course survey said they rode sports bikes, suggesting Bikesafe does attract some participants from this group, there may be a case for focusing more on this target group if they are seen as particularly vulnerable.
- Bikesafe attracts people who *want* to be safe – 85% of respondents said they chose to participate in Bikesafe Scotland to improve their safety levels. There is a more complex problem in attracting people who *need* to be safer but have not yet recognised that this is a real problem for them.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPACT OF BIKESAFE SCOTLAND ON RIDER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

Introduction

6.1 This chapter draws on findings from the pre- and post-course survey of 2002 participants to look at the impact of Bikesafe Scotland on participants' attitudes and behaviour. As the response rate for the post-course survey was only 34%, there was obviously a large element of self-selection in terms of deciding to participate in this part of the study. In order to explore potential non-response bias in the findings presented in this chapter, information from pre-course questionnaires was analysed to see if there were any significant differences between those who returned post-course questionnaires and those who did not. In fact, there were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of age, sex, social grade, the type and size of bike they ride, whether they obtained their licence through the Direct Access scheme or not, whether they have gone periods without riding and whether they are members of any motorcycle groups or clubs. Only data from those who returned *both* a pre-course and a post-course questionnaire is used in this chapter, so the two data sets are directly comparable.

Impact on riding speed

6.2 Riding speed and attitudes to riding speed are measured in two ways in the questionnaire. First, respondents were shown pictures of six different roads (varying from built up residential roads to motorways) and asked to state what their normal riding speed would be on the different road types. Respondents were not told what the actual speed limits on these roads were, to try and reduce the problem of them giving what they perceive as 'socially acceptable' responses.¹¹ Second, the questionnaire included a list of errors and violations that riders might make. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they made each kind of error or violation. The list included three items relating specifically to speeding - on motorways, in towns and on country roads.

6.3 Table 6.1 shows the percentage of respondents saying their normal speed is below, at or over the speed limit in the 2002 pre-course and the 2002 post-course survey for the six different road types. The proportion of respondents saying they normally ride *above* the speed limit by 10mph or more is higher after Bikesafe than before for road 1 (a fairly empty 3-lane motorway) and road 6 (a rural road with a 60mph limit). Before taking part in Bikesafe, 28% of respondents indicated a 'normal' speed that was above the speed limit for road 1, while after Bikesafe 41% indicated that they normally rode above the speed limit on this type of road. Similarly, on road 6 the proportion who indicated 'normal' speeds above the speed limit was 15% before and 28% after Bikesafe. Additionally, the proportion saying they ride *below* the speed limit on these two road types decreased in the post-course survey. However, the pictures used to depict these two road types show clear, empty roads away from residential areas. Similarly, the proportion who ride below the speed limit on road 2 and 3 type roads has decreased, while the proportion riding at the speed limit has increased. Road 2 shows a dual carriageway, while road 3 is a broad, empty street away from any obviously residential buildings.

¹¹ The pictures shown to respondents are provided as Appendix B.

6.4 Conversely, on the two roads which are most obviously in residential built up areas with bus stops and parked cars, normal riding speeds have reduced overall with higher proportions of riders saying they normally ride *below* the speed limit after Bikesafe than before.

Table 6.1: Percentage of pre- and post-course participants whose normal speed is above or below the speed limit for different roads

Road type	Phase	Below speed limit	At the speed limit	Above the speed limit by 1-9 miles	Above the speed limit by 10 or more miles
Road One (70 mph)	Pre	5	68	9	19
	Post	2	57	6	35
Road Two (70 mph)	Pre	44	45	4	6
	Post	39	50	5	5
Road Three (40 mph)	Pre	47	41	1	12
	Post	37	53	1	9
Road Four (30mph)	Pre	14	77	5	4
	Post	23	76	1	1
Road Five (30mph)	Pre	8	83	4	5
	Post	13	82	1	4
Road Six (60mph)	Pre	16	68	-	15
	Post	13	59	5	23
					Base = 111

6.5 As table 6.2 shows, a similar pattern emerges as above in relation to how often respondents say they exceed the speed limit on different types of roads when the roads are asked about directly. The proportion of post-course participants who say they exceed the speed limit ‘frequently’ or ‘nearly all the time’ on motorways and on country roads is higher than the proportion of pre-course participants (although the increase in the proportion speeding on country roads is not statistically significant). Conversely, a higher proportion of post-course respondents say they ‘never or hardly ever’ exceed the speed limit in town.

Table 6.2: Percentage of pre- and post-course participants whose normal speed is above or below the speed limit for different roads

	Never/hardly ever		Occasionally		Quite often		Frequently		Nearly all the time	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Exceed the speed limit on a motorway	13	8	29	34	32	19	16	24	8	15
Exceed the speed limit in town	50	68	23	28	5	4	-	1	1	-
Exceed the speed limit on country roads	21	14	35	32	18	25	21	24	3	5
Base = 111										

6.6 While the shift in the proportion of respondents indicating that they do exceed the speed limit is perhaps not very large, the findings from several different questions about speeding behaviour are mutually reinforcing. They suggest that after participating in Bikesafe

some respondents are riding faster on fast, 'open' roads, while some respondents are riding more slowly on slow roads in built-up areas. This apparent changed speed behaviour on the different road types could be interpreted as suggesting that riders have been encouraged to adapt their speed to be appropriate to the prevailing road conditions. Alternatively, it could be argued that increased confidence has encouraged riders to increase their speed. The possibility that some participants engage in 'risk compensation', whereby they trade off new-found confidence and increased skill against higher speed, reflects the findings of previous studies on road safety interventions. For example, European research on the impact of training aimed at helping young drivers cope on slippery roads found that participants' accident involvement actually *increased* after the training.¹² It was suggested that although they had achieved a small increase in competence in terms of their ability to handle difficult driving conditions, this was offset by a large increase in confidence in their own abilities as drivers.

Impact on behaviour in relation to violations/mistakes

6.7 Table 6.3 shows the frequency of a range of violations and mistakes made by Bikesafe participants pre- and post-course. There does not appear to be a big difference in the reported frequency of violations and/or rule-bending pre- and post- Bikesafe. In relation to just over half of the mistakes or violations shown in the table, there had been no discernible change in frequency pre- and post-course. In relation to three of the violations or mistakes, the proportion saying they 'never' or 'hardly ever' did them is slightly higher post-course than pre-course. The mistakes which appear to have reduced in frequency are 'braking too quickly on a slippery road', 'finding your back wheel slipping away when you take a bend' and 'forgetting to switch off indicators after a manoeuvre'. The first two of these are associated with control over the bike. Since 'loss of control' was identified as the most common precipitating factor in fatal motorcycle accidents where the motorcyclist was judged to be primarily responsible in a TRL report based on analysis of police fatal accident reports (Lynam et al, 2001), this appears to be a positive outcome for Bikesafe Scotland.

6.8 Conversely, the frequency of riders 'riding on the wrong side of the road to get to the head of a queue of traffic' and 'riding between lanes or slow or stationary traffic' appears to be slightly higher post-course than pre-course, although this increase is not statistically significant.

6.9 Analysis of past-participants' (those who were involved in Bikesafe in 2001) frequency of violations and rule bending shows a very similar pattern to 2002 post-participants. The only significant difference is in relation to frequency of 'becoming angered by a driver and indicating hostility'. Sixty two per cent of pre- and post-course 2002 participants 'never' or 'hardly ever' do this compared with 50% of previous participants. This could perhaps be due to the emphasis placed on 'attitude' in the Assessed Rides – was it more of a focus in 2002? Alternatively, it could be that over a year, the number of occasions where riders become angered with drivers means their frustration over-rides any lessons learned in Bikesafe.

¹² Katila, A, Keskinen, E, and Hatakka, M (1996) 'Conflicting goals of skid training', *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, Vol. 28, No. 6, pp785-789

Table 6.3: Frequency of violations and rule bending pre- and post-course

Action	Never/ hardly ever		Occasionally		Often		Frequently/ all the time	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Drive so close to a vehicle in front that it would be difficult to stop in emergency	69	70	23	25	5	4	2	1
Forget to switch off indicators after a manoeuvre	56	67	35	29	6	4	1	1
Overtake on the inside	71	71	22	24	5	4	-	1
Cross a junction knowing that the traffic lights have already turned	91	95	8	5	-	-	-	-
Miss 'stop' or 'give way' signs and narrowly avoid a collision	97	100	2	-	-	-	-	-
Brake too quickly on a slippery road	75	90	23	9	-	1	-	-
Find your back wheel slipping away when you take a bend, almost causing you to lose control	89	96	10	4	-	-	-	-
Ride on the wrong side of the road to get to the head of a queue of traffic	41	36	37	46	16	9	5	9
Fail to notice pedestrians when turning into a side street from a main road	97	98	2	3	-	-	-	-
Attempt to overtake someone that you hadn't noticed to be signalling a turn	97	97	1	4	-	-	-	-
Become angered by a driver and indicate your hostility	62	62	28	32	7	4	1	3
Pull out of a junction so far that the driver with right of way has to stop	96	96	2	4	-	-	-	-
Realise you have no clear recollection of the road along which you have been travelling	76	79	18	21	4	1	1	-
Ride between lanes of slow or stationary traffic	19	16	33	35	26	23	20	26
Had a race with another driver / biker on a public road	88	89	10	9	1	1	-	1
Crossed a continuous white line	85	86	13	10	1	3	-	1
Overtake up the middle of a road when there is traffic in both directions	79	80	14	14	5	5	1	1

Base = 111

6.10 Table 6.4 shows the perceptions of participants in relation to the impact which Bikesafe has had on their riding behaviour. The results are fairly positive with less than 5% of 2001 and 2002 participants agreeing with the statement 'Bikesafe did not make any difference to the way I ride my bike'. Encouragingly, just 3% of respondents to the 2001 survey 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'I have forgotten a lot of what I learnt on the Bikesafe scheme'. This suggests that participants do feel they retain the advice and experience they gain from Bikesafe, even when a year has elapsed since they took part.

6.11 Over 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Bikesafe had provided them with useful safety tips and over three quarters agreed or strongly agreed that the scheme had taught them to ride more defensively. ‘Defensive riding’ is difficult to measure quantitatively. However, the fact that around a third of all respondents said that the most useful elements of Bikesafe were tips about ‘traffic awareness, looking ahead and reading the roads correctly’ – all elements associated with defensive riding - suggests that Bikesafe was fairly successful in promoting defensive riding.

6.12 A further positive sign is that around a quarter of respondents agree that they wear better protective clothing as a result of the Bikesafe Scotland scheme.

6.13 Over a third of respondents agree that Bikesafe taught them to take corners more quickly. The impact of this on safety is debatable. The decision to take corners more quickly may involve some kind of trade off between speed and safety - it could be that participants feel more confident in their riding and are therefore happy to take corners at higher speeds. Participants may previously have been cornering at speed but feeling unsafe and now feel safer. Alternatively, it could be that participants were previously endangering themselves by slowing down too much while cornering and are now adopting a more appropriate speed for the manoeuvre.

6.14 A generally positive element is that the levels of agreement are broadly similar for all statements for 2001 and 2002 participants. This suggests that any lessons learnt from the Bikesafe scheme have a long lasting effect, with those who participated over 18 months ago still agreeing they learnt from the scheme.

Table 6.4: Level of agreement with statements about affect of Bikesafe Scotland on riding behaviour (% of respondents)

	Strongly agree		Agree		No opinion		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001
The Bikesafe scheme taught me to ride more defensively	25	25	54	53	8	9	12	12	1	1
The Bikesafe scheme taught me to take corners more quickly	11	7	23	32	17	19	44	38	5	3
The Bikesafe scheme did not make any difference to how I ride my bike	3	1	4	3	3	3	46	42	45	51
Bikesafe provided me with useful safety tips	46	52	47	44	4	1	3	1	1	1
I have forgotten a lot of what I learnt on the Bikesafe scheme	3	1	1	2	1	5	63	60	32	32
I wear better protective clothing as a result of the Bikesafe scheme	5	7	23	18	23	16	40	51	10	8
Base 2001 = 167 Base 2002 = 111										

Key points:

- Analysis of frequency of riding above the speed limit suggests that a slightly higher proportion of participants ride faster on motorways and country roads after Bikesafe than before.
- Road type appears to be a major influence on speed, with riders being much less likely to exceed the speed limit on roads in built-up areas. Bikesafe does appear to have an impact on this, with a higher proportion of respondents saying they 'never' or 'hardly ever' exceed the speed limit in town after Bikesafe than before.
- Bikesafe does not appear to have a major impact on the frequency of the majority of violations and rule bending, with no changes in frequency occurring post-Bikesafe.
- However, after Bikesafe, participants appear to be slightly less likely to forget to turn off indicators, brake too quickly on a slippery road and find their back wheel slipping away when taking a bend. The latter two are particularly important as they are associated with improved bike control – a central theme of Bikesafe Scotland.
- Participants' perceptions of the impact of Bikesafe on their riding are, however more positive. Less than 5% of participants agreed that 'Bikesafe did not make any difference to the way I ride my bike'.
- Conversely, over 90% agreed that Bikesafe had provided them with useful safety tips and over three quarters agreed that the scheme had taught them to ride more defensively.
- The concurrence in attitudes between 2001 and 2002 participants is encouraging as it suggests that participants retain lessons from Bikesafe even when a year has elapsed since participation.

CHAPTER SEVEN ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

7.1 In addition to highlighting specific strengths and weaknesses of the current Bikesafe Scotland scheme, the qualitative interviews with stakeholders also raised a variety of issues of relevance to the future development of safety initiatives targeting motorcyclists. Issues discussed included:

- who should run assessed rides?
- is there scope for involving additional stakeholders in initiatives like Bikesafe Scotland?
- should Bikesafe or some other scheme be offered to motorcyclists as an alternative to prosecution?
- does the need for Bikesafe indicate the need to address weaknesses in the current system of compulsory training? and
- should motorcycle safety initiatives target riders of scooters as well as motorcyclists?

Who should run assessed rides?

7.2 As discussed in Chapter Five, above, respondents from the qualitative interviews viewed the involvement of qualified police riders in running the Assessed Ride programme as one of Bikesafe Scotland's major strengths. Police riders are well-respected by many sections of the motorcycling community - one provider of alternative motorcycle training suggested that the police are seen to offer a level of expertise that a civilian trainer simply could not provide.

7.3 However, balanced against this is the fact that running the Bikesafe Scotland assessed rides represents a major draw on police resources, with many officers giving up their spare time to help run Bikesafe. Further, as discussed in Chapter Five, while the fact the course is run by the police may be a draw for some sections of the motorcycle community, for others who are more suspicious of the police it may be a deterrent. This appears to leave Bikesafe Scotland with a 'Catch 22' situation in which police involvement is a major draw for some participants, while at the same time it is the reason others stay away.

7.4 The obvious alternative would be to involve trainers from the private or voluntary sectors in running Bikesafe or similar schemes. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) and Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) (both registered charities) already offer advanced riding tests and have numerous affiliated groups or training schools in Scotland. BMF also offer a range of rider training courses, including 'refresher' courses for 'born again bikers' and have a number of training centres based in Scotland. Involving these kind of organisations in Bikesafe or similar schemes was seen as an option by some respondents, including alternative training providers themselves, particularly if the scheme was backed by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) and the government. Government backing was seen as important to encouraging sufficient alternative training providers to become involved.

7.5 However, many respondents identified further difficulties (in addition to the loss of expert police riders) with such a scheme. Firstly, private training providers would not be able to offer such provision totally free of charge, which may deter some potential participants

from taking part. Secondly, while voluntary organisations like the IAM do offer assessments free of charge, it was suggested by a representative from IAM that IAM volunteers might struggle to cope if demand for their services increased very substantially, while several private trainers noted the shortage of advanced motorcycle trainers in some areas of Scotland. This suggests that even if other organisations became involved in Bikesafe Scotland there may still be a resource problem if participation increased.

7.6 Finally, it was suggested that involving private or voluntary training providers might reduce the credibility of Bikesafe Scotland. While all car driving instructors are accredited by the DSA, there is no similar government approved list of riding instructors. There would therefore be an issue over how you establish that private trainers who became involved in running a public sponsored motorcycle safety scheme had the necessary qualifications and experience to do so. This problem may not be insurmountable however, since as noted in Chapter Two the government has announced plans for the statutory registration of motorcycle instructors (see DfT, 2000).

Involving other stakeholders

7.7 Another issue for the future development of Bikesafe Scotland and other initiatives targeting motorcyclists is the extent to which there is scope for involving other stakeholders in these initiatives. Interviews with representatives from MAG, BMF and Black Horse Finance asked them about their reasons for becoming involved with Bikesafe and what this involvement entailed, while interviews with motorcycle retailers, insurers and training providers explored the scope for involving other stakeholders in the future.

MAG, BMF and Black Horse Finance

7.8 Bikesafe Scotland is a multi-agency initiative and representatives from MAG, BMF and Black Horse Finance are already involved with Bikesafe through its Working Group. BMF and MAG were involved from very early on in lobbying ACPOS to approve the setting-up of Bikesafe Scotland. The aim of their involvement was two-fold – to enable bikers' views to feed into the initiative, and to lend the initiative credibility, since there was some concern that motorcyclists would not participate in a police-led initiative.

7.9 MAG was involved in publicising Bikesafe Scotland in its early stages, primarily through their newspaper, which is distributed to all MAG members and handed out to motorcyclists at bike shows, but also through local MAG groups. MAG's Scottish representative suggested that through their membership network, MAG were able to publicise Bikesafe to motorcyclists that the police might not otherwise have been able to reach. BMF publicise Bikesafe Scotland primarily through talking to motorcyclists about advanced training at bike shows and club events, where Bikesafe is presented as an option alongside IAM, ROSPA and other training courses.

7.10 Black Horse Finance has been involved in Bikesafe Scotland primarily through printing leaflets and providing advice on possible sponsors from the motorcycle industry. They view their involvement as giving a reasonable profile for the company at relatively little cost.

Awareness of Bikesafe Scotland among additional potential stakeholders?

7.11 Interviewees from outside the Scottish Police forces and the Bikesafe Working Group were asked whether they were currently aware of Bikesafe Scotland and whether they were involved in the scheme in any way.

7.12 Most of the providers of alternative motorcycle training we spoke to had heard of Bikesafe Scotland and were very enthusiastic about the scheme, with the exception of one trainer who suggested that he lost potential customers to Bikesafe. Most also said they recommended Bikesafe to other people, although none of the trainers interviewed had actually been on the course themselves. Awareness of Bikesafe was also high among the motorcycle retailers we spoke to. All 7 had heard of Bikesafe, although their level of knowledge was variable.

7.13 Two representatives from insurance companies who specialise in motorcycle insurance were interviewed. One had heard of the Bikesafe scheme operated by some of the English police forces, although not Bikesafe Scotland specifically, while the other had never heard of Bikesafe.

Interest in promoting Bikesafe Scotland?

7.14 Respondents were asked how they would feel about becoming involved with Bikesafe Scotland or similar public schemes promoting motorcycle safety, and what sort of support they felt they might be able to offer. The scope for involving private training providers in running schemes like Bikesafe is discussed above. Retailers and insurers saw their role primarily in terms of either promoting Bikesafe to customers or offering financial support of some kind, either by sponsoring the scheme itself or offering discounts to Bikesafe participants.

7.15 Some retailers were already involved in promoting Bikesafe Scotland, either through posters and leaflets or through customer evenings where the police come to the shop and talk about various aspects of motorcycle safety with recent customers. One retailer had loaned bikes to the police to put on display at Bikesafe Scotland events. Other retailers who were not currently involved in Bikesafe said they would be interested in promoting it, but would need to be approached by the police to do so.

7.16 One retailer said that he had previously been involved in Bikesafe Scotland through customer evenings, but that this had stopped a few years back and he was not aware the scheme still existed. He felt that Bikesafe only happened sporadically in his area and, while he would like to help more, he wanted to see a more consistent approach to the scheme. Another suggested that while they don't normally get involved with things that are not of direct benefit to the business, if Bikesafe or any other scheme became something that the police, the Local Authority or the motorcycling associations promoted heavily they would have to look at supporting it.

7.17 These comments suggest that while some retailers are already involved in promoting Bikesafe to customers, there is scope for involving others. However, the willingness of businesses to get involved may depend partly on how Bikesafe is perceived by retailers – is it a consistent, long-term initiative that is fully supported by the police and others? – and partly

on the capacity of Bikesafe representatives to make and retain contact with different retailers in their area.

7.18 Neither of the insurance companies we spoke to were actively involved in supporting Bikesafe or any other safety initiatives, although one had previously sponsored the motorcycle theory guide. Both stressed that any financial support they offered would have to be commercially viable for them. One suggested that they might consider supporting publicity material if they could be named as a sponsor in order to advertise their business.

Discounts for Bikesafe Scotland participants?

7.19 Retailers and insurers were both asked whether they would consider offering discounts to customers who had taken part in the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme. None of the retailers interviewed currently offered discounts for Bikesafe participants, although 3 said they would consider it if they knew more about Bikesafe. However, others would not offer discounts, either because they already offer discounts for membership of bike clubs or for other advanced training courses and feel that these discounts cover all their target customer groups, or because they do not feel that discounts would be viable from a business perspective.

7.20 The insurance companies we interviewed were both insurance brokers rather than underwriters. Both had already negotiated discounts for customers for different kinds of advanced training or qualifications, including things like The Edge, Honda MAC, Advanced Police Motorcycling qualifications, BMF Blue Riband, ROSPA Gold Standard and IAM Advanced Riding Test. One also arranged discounts for members of various motorcycle owners clubs (BMW etc.). However, it was suggested that in terms of a scheme like Bikesafe Scotland it would be better for the organisers to contact individual insurance underwriters or the Association of British Insurers directly. Insurance brokers are only able to negotiate discounts for Bikesafe participants who use that broker, and not for all customers of a particular underwriter.

7.21 For an insurance broker to negotiate a discount for Bikesafe participants, they would need evidence that they would get a reasonable number of enquiries relating to Bikesafe. Police forces elsewhere in the UK have managed to secure discounts for Bikesafe participants – for example, Bikesafe Northern Ireland participants can get 10% off Equity Red Star insurance policies through Adelaide Insurance. This suggests there is some scope for looking at ways to make Bikesafe financially attractive to participants, which may be one way of encouraging more motorcyclists from hard-to-reach target groups to attend.

Alternatives to prosecution?

7.22 The issue of how to engage with hard-to-reach target groups, particularly those who may be classed as ‘dangerous riders’ who are most at risk of accident involvement, led some respondents to discuss whether Bikesafe or another scheme should be offered to riders as an alternative to prosecution. Driver Improvement schemes for car drivers have been operating in England and Wales for over 10 years and a similar scheme was recently piloted in West Lothian. The West Lothian scheme allowed the Procurator Fiscal to divert drivers charged with careless driving to a retraining course operated by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (at a charge of around £95 to the participant) instead of prosecution.

7.23 Northumbria police force began a similar scheme for motorcyclists in April 2002. Their ‘Weekender’ initiative involves issuing all motorcyclists who are involved in incidents to which the police are called with ‘yellow’ or ‘red’ cards. ‘Yellow cards’ are issued for incidents that do not actually involve an accident or a major offence – e.g. inappropriate cornering or overtaking. Three different yellow cards have been devised for the 3 most common forms of inappropriate riding – bad cornering, overtaking and bike control. The 3 leaflets outline the problem, give tips for avoiding it, and give contact details for organisations that offer advanced motorcycle training. The ‘red card’ is issued to motorcyclists involved in minor motorcycle accidents, and offers them training as an alternative to prosecution. They are referred to the Local Authority (who also run Northumbria’s Driver Improvement Scheme) and are required to take a two-day training course costing £155 or to face prosecution. By November 2002, Northumbria police had issued around 50 yellow cards and eight red cards.

7.24 There was support among interviewees, particularly among advanced training providers, for some such diversionary scheme for motorcyclists in Scotland (although several respondents expressed doubt about the general effectiveness of such schemes in terms of trying to train people “whose heart is not really in it”). However, many respondents identified major obstacles to Bikesafe Scotland as it operates currently being offered as an alternative to prosecution.

7.25 First, several police Bikesafe representatives emphasised the fact that Bikesafe Scotland does not offer any instruction, and therefore could not be seen as a ‘re-training’ course in its current form. Second, Bikesafe Scotland already has problems with limited resources, and it was felt that offering it as an alternative to prosecution would only exacerbate these difficulties. Third, one police representative suggested that offering a police-run scheme as an alternative to prosecution could be viewed as a conflict of interests by the motorcycling community, since the police might be seen to be stopping riders just to increase the number of participants in Bikesafe. Last, it was suggested that if Bikesafe was offered as an alternative to prosecution it would deter other motorcyclists from taking part. This might include ‘born again bikers’ who are not necessarily ‘reckless’ riders, but they may still become involved in accidents because they are unused to modern bikes or have misremembered their own ability.

7.26 In general, respondents who thought there was some merit in offering training as an alternative to prosecution thought this would probably have to be run by private or voluntary training providers like ROSPA or IAM rather than by the police. Bikesafe was viewed as a different type of scheme, in that it is free, it does not offer training as such, and it is aimed at riders who actually want to improve their skills voluntarily.

Weaknesses in compulsory training?

7.27 Interviewees were asked whether they thought the need for the Bikesafe Scotland initiative to try and tackle rising motorcycle casualties indicated weaknesses in the current system of compulsory training for motorcyclists. In general, alternative training providers were very supportive of Compulsory Basic Training for motorcyclists, whereby riders must demonstrate that they can ride their bike to a minimum standard before they are allowed out on their own on the road. The standard motorcycle test was also generally seen as fair and of a high enough standard.

7.28 However, both police Bikesafe Scotland representatives and some providers of advanced training were more critical of the Direct Access scheme. Respondents were concerned that motorcyclists who go through Direct Access do not have chance to build up some experience before they move on to riding very powerful ‘superbikes’ and that they are therefore more likely to be involved in accidents. One trainer suggested that there should be compulsory post-test training for riders who have gone through the Direct Access scheme.

Scooters

7.29 Several respondents, particularly from the police, suggested that scooter safety may become an important issue for future safety campaigns targeting two-wheeled vehicles. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that scooters are increasing in popularity as a form of transport, particularly in big cities. Scooters present different safety issues to motorcycles, and it is unclear at this stage whether their increased popularity will be accompanied by an increase in accidents involving scooters. However, Lothian and Borders and Strathclyde police have both started to look at ways of targeting Bikesafe at scooter riders – for example, through running safety evenings at scooter retailers. It was suggested that while motorcycling is a hobby, and therefore motorcyclists may take more of an interest in becoming better riders, scooters are primarily used for city riding and scooter riders may be less concerned to improve their skills.

Key points:

- Some interviewees thought there might be scope for involving trainers from the private or voluntary sector in running Bikesafe Scotland or a similar scheme. However, it was recognised that this would create various difficulties around charging, resources and the credibility of these trainers.
- Interviews with stakeholders from the motorcycle industry suggested that there is some scope for involving them more in promoting and supporting Bikesafe Scotland or similar initiatives. However, their willingness to support such schemes is dependent on the scheme being perceived as a long term initiative that is fully supported by the police and others.
- There may also be some scope for negotiating discounts for Bikesafe Scotland participants with some motorcycle retailers and insurers. This could be one way of encouraging more motorcyclists from hard to reach groups to attend.
- There was support among interviewees for some kind of diversionary scheme for motorcyclists, similar to the Driver Improvement schemes that operate for car drivers. However, offering Bikesafe Scotland assessed rides as an alternative to prosecution was seen as problematic since it does not involve any instruction and there are already problems with limited resources. It was also felt that offering a police-run scheme as an alternative to prosecution might be seen as a conflict of interest, and that using Bikesafe in this way might deter other motorcyclists who have not committed offences from taking part.
- Several interviewees were concerned about the impact of the Direct Access scheme on motorcycle casualties. It was viewed as allowing motorcyclists to graduate to more

powerful bikes before they have had time to build up the experience to control them properly.

- Scooter safety was identified as a potentially important issue for future safety campaigns targeting two-wheeled vehicles.

CHAPTER EIGHT CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 This final chapter of the report uses the findings presented in this report to draw conclusions and make recommendations about the future development of Bikesafe Scotland and other campaigns aimed at reducing motorcycle casualties in Scotland.

Trends in motorcycling and motorcycle accidents

8.2 Motorcycle casualties in Scotland have been rising since the mid-1990s, and there has been no fall in the numbers of casualties since Bikesafe Scotland was introduced in 1999. However, the number of motorcycles registered in Scotland has also risen since 1995, so it is very difficult to infer from this whether or not Bikesafe has had any impact in terms of accident reduction.

8.3 Older motorcyclists account for an increasing proportion of motorcycle casualties in Scotland. While 30-39 year olds accounted for just 14% of all motorcycle casualties in 1991, by 2001 they accounted for 35%. This suggests that emerging concerns about the safety of 'born again bikers' may be justified, and that older motorcyclists should remain a key target for motorcycle safety campaigners.

Satisfaction with the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme

8.4 The evaluation found that Bikesafe Scotland is viewed very positively, both by participants and by stakeholders in the motorcycle community. Almost 100% of respondents to the surveys thought Bikesafe had been 'very' or 'fairly' useful, and the vast majority said they would recommend it to others and that all motorcyclists should be encouraged to go on the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride scheme.

8.5 Qualitative interviewees highlighted the fact that Bikesafe Scotland is free, and therefore attracts people who might otherwise be deterred from advanced training by the cost involved, as a key strength. The issue of cost is a key consideration if private training providers were to become involved in either Bikesafe or another scheme – if they levied a charge on participants, would this deter many people who would benefit from the scheme from taking part?

8.6 The contribution of Bikesafe Scotland towards improving relations between the police and the motorcycle community was also identified as an important strength of the scheme. Any plans to alter or replace Bikesafe Scotland would need to consider the potential impact of this in terms of damaging or weakening these relationships.

Impact of Bikesafe Scotland on participants' attitudes and behaviour

8.7 Findings on the impact of Bikesafe Scotland on the behaviour and attitudes of participants were somewhat mixed. There seemed to be an improvement in the proportion of respondents saying they 'never' or 'hardly ever' "brake too quickly on a slippery road" or "find your back wheel slipping away when you take a bend, almost causing you to lose control". These types of riding behaviour appear to be associated with control over the bike. Since "loss of control" was identified as the most common precipitating factor in fatal motorcycle accidents where the motorcyclist was judged to be primarily responsible in a TRL

report based on analysis of police fatal accident reports (Lynam et al, 2001), this appears to be a positive outcome for Bikesafe.

8.8 Participants also seem to *feel* that Bikesafe has a positive impact on their riding behaviour. Less than 5% of participants agreed with the statement “Bikesafe did not make any difference to the way I ride my bike” and over three quarters agreed that Bikesafe had taught them to ride more defensively. ‘Defensive riding’ is difficult to measure quantitatively. However, the fact that around a third of all respondents said that the most useful elements of Bikesafe were tips about ‘traffic awareness, looking ahead and reading the roads correctly’ – all elements associated with defensive riding - suggests that Bikesafe was fairly successful in promoting defensive riding.

8.9 However, in relation to riding speed, while the proportion of respondents saying they would normally ride *below* the speed limit in roads in obviously built-up areas increased after participation in Bikesafe, the proportion saying they would ride at 10mph or more *above* the speed limit on faster roads in non-built up areas also increased. The proportion of post-course participants who say they often exceed the speed limit on motorways and on country roads is higher than the proportion of pre-course participants, while a higher proportion of post-course participants say they ‘never or hardly ever’ exceed the speed limit in town. This can be seen in terms of an improvement in participants’ concern for safety while riding in built-up, residential areas where they are likely to come into contact with many other road users. However, given that the proportion of serious and fatal motorcycle accidents is much higher in non-built up areas, the findings relating to participants’ speeds on these roads are cause for concern.

8.10 The findings above perhaps suggest that while the Assessed Ride scheme has a positive effect on participants’ feelings of control over their bike, it is less successful in addressing speeding among participants. In fact, it may be that one follows on from the other – participants feel more in control of their bikes and therefore are comfortable riding at higher speeds. It is worth noting that some forces have modified the content of their Bikesafe Scotland programme to focus more on attitudes to riding, and it is possible that attitudes to speed could be tackled in this context.

Resources

8.11 Many interviewees suggested that Bikesafe Scotland could be improved if it was better publicised, or if it tried to attract more participants from key target groups. However, representatives from the eight Scottish forces suggested that they could not do more without more resources. In fact, lack of resources have led to assessed rides being cancelled and to the programme being scaled back in some areas. Any further expansion or development of the Bikesafe Scotland scheme is likely to be difficult unless dedicated resources are made available for this.

Involving alternative training providers

8.12 One option for reducing the pull of Bikesafe Scotland on police resources which might otherwise be devoted to operational duties would be to involve alternative training providers from the private or voluntary sector in the provision of Bikesafe or a similar scheme. In addition to the issue of cost, mentioned above, a key issue is whether the loss of involvement by trained police motorcyclists would mean that the scheme loses some of its

attraction to participants. It may be that some kind of combined scheme, with input from both the police and private and voluntary training providers, could be investigated.

Target groups

8.13 There was debate over whether Bikesafe Scotland attracts the right target groups. It was suggested that it tends to be “preaching to the converted”, in that the people who go on it are the kind of people who are interested in being safe riders and would take advanced training anyway. This claim found some support in the finding that 85% of respondents to the pre-course survey said they were taking Bikesafe to improve their safety while riding.

8.14 Findings from the survey suggested that Bikesafe Scotland is relatively successful in attracting ‘born again bikers’ and riders who obtained their licence through the Direct Access scheme. Although 27% of respondents to the pre-course survey said they rode sports bikes, a number of qualitative interviewees suggested that Bikesafe could be doing more to target sports bike riders. If sports bike riders are particularly at risk of accidents, partly because of the power and speed of the bikes they ride, then steps could be taken to attract more of these riders to Bikesafe or similar schemes. Suggestions for doing so focused on targeting sports bike riders “on their own turf” – e.g. at track days or on roads they often use.

Encouraging participation in further training

8.15 Concerns were raised over whether participants in Bikesafe Scotland are going on to take advanced motorcycle training, or whether they see Bikesafe as sufficient in itself. Overall, two-thirds of participants said their Bikesafe assessor had not suggested they undertake any further training. This may suggest that the advanced training message could be better promoted by Bikesafe organisers.

Involving additional stakeholders from the motorcycle industry

8.16 Although Bikesafe organisers have made an effort to involve local dealers in promoting Bikesafe Scotland, the qualitative interviews suggested that there was scope to get more dealers involved in terms of promoting Bikesafe in their shop and through customer evenings, and even persuading them to offer discounts for Bikesafe participants. Interviews with insurers suggested there may be scope for securing discounts on insurance for Bikesafe participants – something that Bikesafe Northern Ireland have already achieved.

Alternatives to prosecution

8.17 While there is some support for offering training as an alternative to prosecution to motorcyclists who are involved in minor offences, it was generally felt that it would be inappropriate for the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme to play this role since the assessed ride does not include any actual training. Further, if consideration is being given to such a scheme, it would need to be run by independent training providers, not the police, to avoid the perception of a conflict of interest.

1. The quantitative element of this research consisted of before and after surveys of people who took part in the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme between June and September 2002 and a separate survey of people who took part in assessed rides in 2001.

Before and after surveys of 2002 Bikesafe Scotland participants

Pre-course survey

2. Police Bikesafe representatives from each of the eight Scottish forces were asked to hand out self-completion questionnaires to everyone who took part in Bikesafe Scotland between mid-June and the end of September 2002. Participants were provided with a reply paid envelope in which to return their questionnaire, or if they preferred they could return them to the police Bikesafe representative during the theory session.

3. The questionnaire was designed to provide a measure of participants' riding attitudes and behaviour *before* they took part in Bikesafe, so the Bikesafe representatives were asked to ensure that they were handed out (and preferably filled in) prior to the theory session. The questionnaire took about 10 minutes to complete and covered topics including:

- Information about the bike(s) participants ride
- Participants' riding experiences, from passing their test onwards (including any breaks in riding)
- Preferred and normal riding speeds on various different roads
- How they heard about Bikesafe and why they decided to take part
- Whether/how often they commit errors or violations while riding

4. The questions about violations and preferred and normal speeds draw on recent research on drivers and speeding, carried out by NFO System Three and Napier University for the Scottish Executive (Napier TRL and NFO System Three, forthcoming). The question about preferred and normal speeds referred to photographs of 6 different roads which were included in the questionnaire.

5. Completed questionnaires were returned by 324 participants. According to figures provided by police Bikesafe representatives for June to September participation in Bikesafe, this represents a response rate of approximately 58%. This assumes that all participants were in fact issued with questionnaires – if this was not the case, the response rate may in fact be higher.

Post-course survey

6. All 2002 Bikesafe Scotland participants who returned a pre-course survey were sent a second survey with a reply paid envelope by post approximately three months after they took part in the theory session. This questionnaire was intended to find out what they thought of the Assessed Ride programme and whether it had any impact on their driving behaviour. Topics covered included:

- Agreement with various statements about the Bikesafe course
- How useful participants found the scheme and what improvements they would suggest
- Preferred and normal riding speeds on various different roads
- Whether/how often they commit errors or violations while riding

7. All participants who returned completed post-course questionnaires were entered into a prize draw for a voucher for the motorcycle store of their choice. Completed questionnaires were returned from 111 participants (34% of those who returned pre-course questionnaires).

Survey of 2001 participants

8. Police Bikesafe representatives were asked to provide names and addresses of people who participated in the Assessed Ride programme in 2001.¹³ These people were sent a questionnaire with a reply paid envelope and a letter explaining the purpose of the research. This survey was intended to provide some indication of whether people still felt that Bikesafe had been useful and whether it had any effect on their riding behaviour a year after completing the course. It included a combination of topics from the 2002 pre-course and post-course questionnaires, such as:

- Details about their bike(s) and riding experiences
- Preferred and normal riding speeds on various different roads
- Whether/how often they commit errors or violations while riding
- How useful participants found Bikesafe and what improvements they would suggest
- Agreement with various statements about the Bikesafe course

9. Again, participants who returned completed post-course questionnaires were entered into a prize draw for a voucher for the motorcycle store of their choice. Completed questionnaires were returned from 167 – a response rate of 47%.

10. Full copies of all three questionnaires are available from the research team on request (e-mail: rachel.ormston@nfoeurope.com).

11. Table 1, below, shows the number of questionnaires returned for all three surveys from the different force areas. No 2002 questionnaires were received from participants in the Fife area as no assessed ride sessions ran during the period when the pre-course questionnaires were distributed.

¹³ Applicants for Bikesafe sign a form stating that any information they provide can be used in conjunction with the Bikesafe initiative, so the provision of contact details conformed with data protection guidelines.

Table 1: Questionnaires returned by police force area (number of questionnaires)

	2002 pre-course	2002 post-course	2001
Lothian and Borders	60	22	23
Grampian	13	6	53
Strathclyde	186	47	22
Central	14	6	15
Dumfries and Galloway	21	11	9
Northern	15	8	27
Tayside	15	11	3
Fife	0	0	15
TOTAL	324	111	167

Qualitative component

12. The purpose of the qualitative component of the research was to explore the strengths and weaknesses of Bikesafe Scotland and to identify issues for the future development of motorcycle safety campaigns with key stakeholders.

In-depth interviews with police Bikesafe representatives and Bikesafe Scotland Working Group members

13. In-depth telephone interviews were carried out with representatives of the organisations involved in running Bikesafe Scotland, details of whom were provided by the Scottish Road Safety Campaign and the secretary of Bikesafe Scotland. A total of 12 interviews were conducted between late August and early October 2002. Representatives of BMF, MAG and Blackhorse Finance were interviewed, in addition to Bikesafe representatives from each of the eight Scottish Police force areas and a representative of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) Road Policing Standing Committee.

14. Interviews were semi-structured and the topics covered varied depending on the individual respondent. However, some of the topics discussed included:

- Details of the Bikesafe Scotland scheme in different areas
- Issues around the promotion of Bikesafe Scotland
- Strengths and weaknesses of Bikesafe Scotland
- Whether Bikesafe Scotland targets specific groups and how successful it is in reaching these groups
- How and why non-police stakeholders became involved in Bikesafe Scotland
- Issues around the voluntary nature of Bikesafe Scotland, including whether it should be an alternative to prosecution

15. Interviews were conducted by members of the NFO Social Research team. With the consent of the interviewees, all but one of these interviews was tape-recorded for subsequent analysis.

In-depth interviews with stakeholders from the motorcycle industry

16. Fifteen telephone interviews were carried out with various stakeholders from the motorcycle industry. Members of the police force involved in running Bikesafe Scotland assisted the NFO Social Research Team in identifying local motorcycle dealers, specialist insurers and training providers across Scotland for interview. Interviews were conducted with 6 alternative providers of advanced motorcycle training in Scotland, 7 Scottish motorcycle retailers and 2 representatives of specialist motorcycle insurance companies.

17. These interviews were intended to provide information that could help to improve the marketing and profile of Bikesafe Scotland or future motorcycle safety initiatives. Again, the topics covered varied depending on the individual respondent. Retailers and insurers were asked whether they had heard of the Bikesafe scheme and whether they promoted it to customers in anyway. They were also asked whether they ever got involved in safety initiatives targeting motorcyclists, and whether they offer, or would consider offering, discounts to riders who have participated in the Bikesafe Scotland Assessed Ride programme.

18. Interviews with alternative training providers were used to assess the possibility of involving other training providers in future schemes aimed at promoting motorcycle safety.

19. Interviews were not recorded, as it was felt that this would deter some interviewees from taking part, but detailed notes were taken for analysis. Again, all interviews were conducted by members of the NFO Social Research team.

ANNEX B

**PICTURES OF ROADS INCLUDED IN
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6



ANNEX C

DEFINITION OF ORGANISATIONS TO WHICH REFERENCES ARE MADE

This section provides brief details of motorcycle, training and other organisations referred to in this evaluation.

Motorcycle Action Group (MAG)

MAG is a national riders rights organisation aimed at motorcyclists. It is a political group rather than just a club, representing riders' interests to policy makers. MAG has upwards of 20,000 members in the UK and there are approximately 207 local MAG affiliated groups across the UK.

British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF)

BMF is a UK-wide lobbying group for motorcyclists, campaigning on a range of issues that affect motorcyclists. It has 25,000 individual members, and many affiliated motorcycle clubs. BMF also offers various rider-training courses through more than 160 BMF accredited training centres.

Black Horse Finance (BHF)

Black Horse Finance (formerly Lloyds UDT) specialises in providing finance for the purchase of new and used motorcycles.

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA)

ROSPA is a registered charity providing information, advice and training on all aspects of safety, including road safety. The ROSPA Advanced Driving Association offers advanced tests to motorcyclists and scooters, conducted by Police Class One riders. A number of private providers of motorcycle training in Scotland are ROSPA accredited.

Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM)

The IAM is a UK-wide road safety organisation with over 200 local affiliated IAM groups. These local groups offer volunteer support and guidance to any motorcyclists wishing to take the IAM Advanced Driving Test, which is approved by the Driving Standards Agency.

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