

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service RTC Case Study



Road Traffic Collision (RTC) reduction remains a priority both nationally and locally. In 2004 the newly enacted Fire and Rescue Services Act, section 8, stated that *...a Fire and Rescue Authority must make provision for the purpose of protecting people from serious harm, to the extent that it considers reasonable to do so, in the event of Road Traffic Collisions, in its area.....'*

In the Essex Fire Authority area in 2006 there were over 1150 persons **Killed** or **Seriously Injured (KSI)** on our roads.

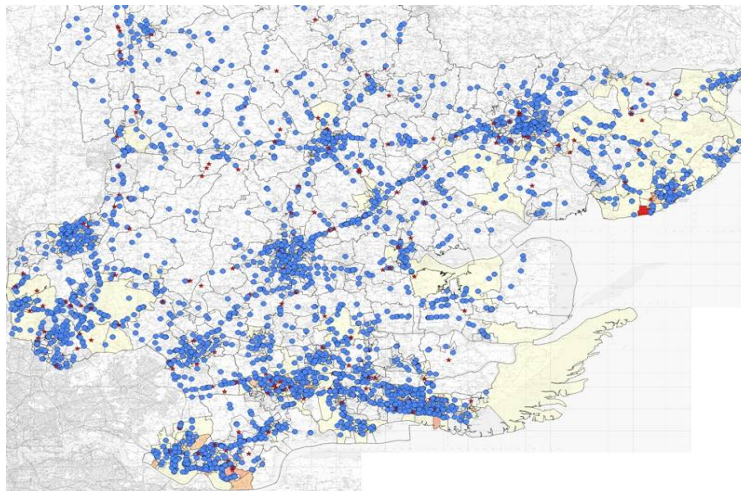


Fig.1 KSI casualties plotted onto Fire Authority area

The chart below captures the 2006 end year figures in the Essex County Council area only , excluding the 2 Unitaries, which themselves added an additional 175 KSI to the Essex Fire Authority figures.

KSI casualties by District 2006

	KSI casualties - 2006						KSI per 100000 population
	Population	All	Drink Drive	Motorcycles	Speeding	Young Drivers	
Basildon	167000	91	12	22	10	17	54.49
Braintree	137800	109	7	27	15	21	79.10
Brentwood	70900	62	3	12	14	18	87.45
Castle Point	87000	42	7	9	4	7	48.28
Chelmsford	161100	130	17	45	22	23	80.70
Colchester	163400	116	7	33	18	27	70.99
Epping	122000	143	16	27	24	34	117.21
Harlow	77700	23	4	6	3	4	29.60
Maldon	60700	59	4	13	13	14	97.20
Rochford	79500	39	4	5	3	2	49.06
Tendring	141800	99	10	23	12	21	69.82
Uttlesford	71100	74	3	20	18	14	104.08
New Essex	1340000	987	94	242	156	202	73.66

In March 2007 Essex County Fire and Rescue Service took the purpose and spirit of the new legislation to move to an unprecedented level of planning and activity, to shift its work on RTC's to more preventative service delivery, whilst still maintaining a robust operational response. It was recognised at the time that this meant a step change across several divisions of the organisation, notably Community Safety, Business Excellence and Operational Response, and a significant cultural shift within an organisation that had worked within the parameters of the same primary governing legislation since 1947.

At the same time, in support of the strategic work, and our new statutory and existing moral obligations, and to plan and deliver activity, ECFRS appointed its first dedicated RTC Reduction manager. The post holder set to work to establish links with the Road Safety Manager and the Network Manager at the County Council, and with the Road Safety Managers in the 2 adjoining Unitary Authorities, the Operations Manager from Essex Police and the Network Manager from the Highways Agency to start the process of establishing and managing a productive and professional relationship, and to agree common aims and objectives towards already agreed outcomes and targets. The response from the East of England Ambulance Service was disappointing, citing "different priorities" for their "already overstretched resources".

In April 2007 ECFRS published its first 'RTC Reduction and Road Safety Strategy' aimed at a) making our roads safer and b) reducing the number of persons killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions, in line with, but being ambitious to exceed, government targets set out in the 10 year '*Tomorrows Roads-Safer for Everyone*' strategy which called for a 40% overall reduction in KSI, a 50% reduction in child KSI and a 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate by the end of 2010, against baseline data from 1994 - 1998.

ECFRS became a strategic member of the newly formed Essex Casualty Reduction Board, comprising high ranking representatives of all the agencies responsible for improving road safety in the Essex area, namely Essex County Council, Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, the East of England Ambulance Service, the Highways Agency and the Essex Speed Camera Partnership Working Group, and including significant support both from and to the Unitary authorities of Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea. The Board members agreed to pool resources to gain added value and increase effectiveness, and agree concerted and coordinated campaigns to reduce casualties. Effort was focused on specific at-risk groups identified through statistical analysis;

'*Tomorrows Roads*' targets were included in the first Local Area Agreement and were adopted by the full Board. In first full year, 2007, we were able to achieve a significant reduction through the work of the Board – sufficient progress to be awarded over £2,000,000 from Government as reward funding. This target has since been adopted into the second Local Area Agreement for 2008.

KSI Casualties by District 2007

	KSI casualties - 2007						KSI per 100000 population
	Population	All	Drink Drive	Motorcycles	Speeding	Young Drivers	
Basildon	167000	83	4	29	17	13	49.70
Braintree	137800	98	8	32	11	18	71.12
Brentwood	70900	62	6	16	3	18	87.45
Castle Point	87000	39	1	12	1	7	44.83
Chelmsford	161100	88	5	22	10	21	54.62
Colchester	163400	98	6	32	18	21	59.98
Epping	122000	131	9	24	18	37	107.38
Harlow	77700	40	2	16	2	8	51.48
Maldon	60700	48	1	12	8	12	79.08
Rochford	79500	31	3	7	2	7	38.99
Tendring	141800	91	13	25	18	22	64.17
Uttlesford	71100	75	3	11	8	20	105.49
New Essex	1340000	884	61	238	116	204	65.97

The Board has developed its own strategy to deliver the target for casualty reduction. It aims to ensure that all partners address the same problem at the same time, leading to a focused approach to addressing key road safety problems. Initiatives are timed to coincide with national road safety campaigns in order to gain maximum impact, but have a specific local focus to increase their effectiveness in the local area. This partnership aims to use the strengths, expertise and resources of all of its partners to create sustainable and effective RTC Reduction activity based on the 5 'E' principles, namely, Enforcement, Engineering, Education, Emergency Response and Evaluation.

As part of its membership, and stated within its newly published Strategy, ECFRS agreed to the following;

- Exploit our unique position to promote Road Safety
- Extend our existing education programmes to include Road Safety
- Continue to support our partners in the delivery of road safety initiatives
- Provide a timely response to RTC's
- Promote, and carry out education, awareness, and where appropriate, enforcement
- Evaluate our performance, and share information and intelligence with our partners

To achieve our aims, the multi-agency group of managers meet every 2 weeks at an event titled 'Battle Plan' This is chaired by the Highways Agency and allows each of the partners to state their intentions, agree resources, and get to work. Previous work is revisited to discuss and agree whether objectives have been met, and to share data and information.

Listed below are 3 examples of activity that have targeted specific groups, at particular times and places, based on reliable data and intelligence

1. Operation NASH

Operation NASH is a multi-agency activity led by Essex Roads Policing that combines the resources and expertise of ECFRS, the Road Safety teams of the local authorities and the Highways Agency to deliver a high profile single day event at various locations across the EFA area. In 2008 this activity was carried out on 4 occasions. The planning for the activity starts at 'Battle Plan' and is data led. It targets road users whose behaviour is likely to lead to death or serious injury, namely speeding, non-seatbelt wearing, mobile phone use and drink driving, and consists of both a covert and overt 'ring of steel' covering routes into and out of a town centre' with a central information / education hub within the town centre.



Fig.2 ECFRS and Road Safety teams at Chelmsford 'Operation NASH 2008'

2. Community Wheels

Community Wheels is a unique, purpose built mobile multi-media education and information resource led by ECFRS and funded by a Road Safety Grant from the Department for Transport. It allows a multi-agency team of Police Officers, Fire-fighters and Road Safety Officers to travel to locations throughout the EFA area and deliver high quality advice, education and information to a wide variety of road users and their passengers. From April to December 2008 it engaged with over 41,000 people at events all over Essex.

Community Wheels activity – April – Dec 2008

Type	No of events	Numbers Attending	Hours
Drink Drive	23	8359	185.46
Young Drivers	62	6338	474.63
Speed	20	3546	117.05
Mobile Phone	7	4110	37.46
Seatbelt	10	4202	52.46
Motorcyclist	2	420	13.33
Variety	41	15348	386.83
	165	42,323	1267.2



Fig.3 Community Wheels vehicle

3. FireBike

FireBike is a top end motorcycle funded jointly by the Board and a local Motorcycle dealership, Cannon Motorcycles, and ridden by ECFRS personnel to deliver Road Safety messages to the motorcycle community, a group acknowledged by the ECRB partners as being 'difficult to reach'

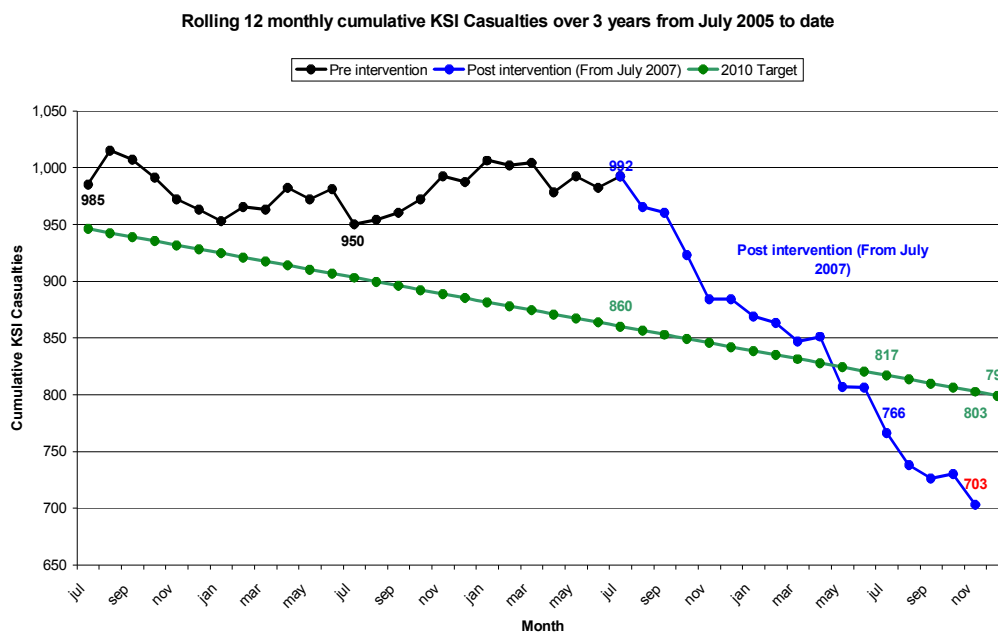


Fig.4 ECFRS / Cannon – BMW R1300S FireBike

The FireBike was formally launched in April 2009, in time for the forthcoming motorcycle ‘season’ and will attend at least 30 events targeting sports riders and riders under 21 years old, both statistically overrepresented in our KSI figures.

Looking forward

The chart below, detailing cumulative casualty figures from 2005 to end 2008, shows a significant fall since the beginning of a combined effort by all of the partners of the Board working together using pooled expertise and resources toward a common agreed aim.



KSI figures are now; it is reported, at an all time low, and the first 2 months of 2009 show a provisional drop of 50% from the same period last year. The turnout figures for 2008 are 202 persons below the 2007 figures, and using the governments own attributable costs, represent a massive efficiency both morally and financially to the people of Essex and its economy. The benefit of a group of dedicated managers and workers, from a very diverse collective of local authority service provision, backed up by agreed aims and objectives toward a common purpose, is now believed to be the most likely reason that this level of success has been achieved, and is being sustained. In November 2008 the work of the group was formally recognised with the award of the 'Prince Michael Road Safety Awards' Highly Commended Certificate.

The table below provides information as to our performance in Essex compared to the National Average. This again demonstrates that our partnership strategies are showing a significant reduction across the whole area of RTC reduction activities.

% change in:	National Average*	Essex
All casualties	-8%	-15%
Slight casualties	-8%	-13%
KSI casualties	-8%	-24%
Fatalities	-15%	-25%
Child casualties	-9%	-11%
Child KSI	-12%	-28%

Data is a comparison of the rolling 12 months to Sep 08 vs. rolling 12 months to Sep 07.

Nationally road casualties had reduced over the 12 month period to Sep 08 compared to the same period of the previous year. The biggest reductions have been in fatalities and child KSI.

Essex exceeds the national average for all areas and in some cases, for example, child casualties and KSI, Essex has performed exceptionally well.

It must be remembered that data for Essex will be much more limited than that used to calculate the national reductions, especially with respect to fatalities and child KSI. In these areas, small changes in actual data can produce big % changes.

*Transport Statistics Bulletin: Road Casualties in Great Britain Quarterly Provisional Estimates, Q3 2008