



How can digital evidence submissions from the public be used more effectively to reduce road offending and improve road safety?

Final Report

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Acknowledgements

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Synopsis

- This is the final (short) report from the RST-funded 'journey cam' project, conducted by Keele University, with Lincolnshire Police and the National Road Crime Reporting Working Group.
- The project's aims were as follows:
 - Mapping current delivery in UK forces to establish: the volume and type of submissions; the range of processes; the challenges and opportunities facing this new area of business.
 - Filling a critical gap in understanding of the public engagement with the approach, including vulnerable road users.
 - Engaging with those receiving an outcome, seeking to understand their experiences and perceptions of the legitimacy of the approach to maximise its deterrent effects.
 - Contributing to understanding the current and future policing landscape, its challenges and opportunities, to produce recommendations for sustainable future delivery.
- Our research took an inclusive view of technologies in this context, including head cams, helmet cams, handlebar cams, body cams and mobile phones with recording capabilities, referring to 'journey cams' to include all forms of reporting.
- A mixed-methods approach was taken, involving interviews, a national survey, visits to and observations in forces, test footage submissions, and a media and communications review.
- All except one UK force now offers some kind of journey cam reporting system, but there are significant inconsistencies in all aspects of delivery and a lack of reliable data. This is a policing context where this 'shows' more than others as it involves a mobile public who will experience a range of force responses
- An emphasis on the experience of certain types of road use (driving) may make it harder for those processing journey cam footage submissions to relate to the experiences and expectations of some road users (e.g. cyclists and pedestrians).
- A presumption that incidents are either high frequency/low risk, or low frequency/high risk seems to be held by some decision-makers, and impacts on responses to incidents (e.g. 'close passes')
- Submitters of footage reported a range of motivations for owning and using dash cams and helmet cams, ranging from personal protection, to filling a gap left by policing, to a desire to capture everyday endangerment experiences to a desire to improve road safety
- Some submitters of footage (particularly cyclists) reported feeling like victims but being treated like witnesses, with strong opposition to being asked questions about their own behaviour/clothing.
- Campaigners for road safety, in particular for vulnerable road users, have embraced journey cams for their potential for deterrence, education and detection, as well as for shedding light on everyday experiences of endangerment.
- An Omnibus population survey showed generally positive public views about journey cams and that considerations on their positive effects on road safety outweigh concerns with privacy or 'snitching'. Levels of awareness of police activity in this area were, however, low.
- Under-resourcing, owing to a lack of prioritisation within and beyond policing, is consistently seen as an issue that impacts negatively on the provision of a response to journey cam submissions.

Full Executive Summary

General

- This is the final (short) report from the RST funded ‘journey cam’ project, conducted by Keele University in partnership with Lincolnshire Police and the National Road Crime Reporting Working Group. The work was also supported by Road Safety Support (RSS), Professor Sally Kyd and Professor Alan Tapp.
- The HMICFRS thematic inspection of roads policing, in 2020, recommended that all forces provide ‘efficient and effective’ systems whereby the public could submit ‘dash cam’ footage for police consideration, and this research aims – in part – to explore what those terms might mean. The report has been produced by Dr Helen Wells and Dr Santiago Amietta and focuses on our Recommendations, and the reasoning behind them
- Our research takes an inclusive view of technologies in this context, including head cams, helmet cams, handlebar cams, body cams and mobile phones with recording capabilities, referring to ‘journey cams’ to include all forms of reporting.
- A series of short reports have also been produced which explore some key areas in more detail. These cover: the results of our national survey; the desirability of a single national delivery mechanism; best practice for marketing and communicating with the public about journey cam submission processes; the issue of submitters (people who submit footage) as victims or witnesses to incidents.
- Further materials have also been produced to assist UK policing in delivering journey cam processes that we believe will represent best practice. These include template responses for forces to use when responding to submitters and communicating with submitters (people whose actions appear in submitted footage), suggested Frequently Asked Questions responses; and a summary of the project recommendations
- This report explains the methodology for the project, makes Recommendations for future practice in this area, and provides the background rationale to those Recommendations.

Approach

- A mixed-methods approach was taken, involving interviews (with those at the frontline in forces, those in strategic local and national roles, and road users themselves) a national survey, visits to and observations in forces, test footage submissions, and a media and communications review. Our outputs are based on the analysis of all our data sources.
- We took an active role in the National Road Crime Reporting Working Group, and drew on the advice and support of other experts (named elsewhere in the report).

The force perspective

- All except one UK force now offers some kind of bespoke reporting system, but our research found that there are significant inconsistencies including in relation to: the 'shopfront' and submission process; what is required from submitters; the initial feedback; the communication of outcomes; the use of different types of disposal.
- Reliable data on the number of submissions, outcomes and source of footage is not available as most forces did not complete the surveys sent out by the National Road Crime Reporting Working Group. This issue is not unique to this research and obtaining data from forces to aid a national understanding of policing remains a challenge.
- A range of delivery models was apparent across forces, in terms of senior-level buy-in, the location of decision-making and processing units, staffing and resourcing, the expertise and background of decision-makers, and funding arrangements.
- This is a policing context in which inconsistency is likely to 'show' as the public engaging with it are mobile and far more likely to have experience of different force approaches than in most reporting contexts.
- Data from the police surveys indicates a high percentage of submissions from cyclists, including 'close passes'. Therefore referring to these developments by the shorthand 'dash cam' is inaccurate and risks misrepresenting the end user population and its needs.
- Forces report a wide variation in the use of different disposal options with differing use of warning letters and education courses, for example. Some forces report much higher percentages of 'No Further Action' decisions than others.
- Interviews with police participants reveal a generally positive view of the approach, a perception that it has road safety benefits, and that demand is going to continue to grow.
- Force participants were preoccupied with the adequate resourcing and staffing of the journey cam approach, which were currently perceived as insufficient in most of the forces we engaged. Even in those that considered their current resourcing to be sufficient there was anxiety about future developments. These concerns stemmed from a perceived undervaluing of roads policing in forces.
- A background in roads policing and good knowledge of traffic laws were considered, by decision-makers, to be the appropriate skills for people in their roles to possess.
- An emphasis on the experience of certain types of road use (driving) may make it harder for decisionmakers to relate to the experiences and expectations of some road users (e.g. cyclists and pedestrians).
- A presumption that incidents are either high frequency/low risk, or low frequency/high risk seems to be held by some decision-makers, and impacts on the response to incidents such as close passes of cyclists.
- While individual submissions are generally valued, police interviewees question the motives of some submitters, in particular those who submit frequently. These submissions were not seen as the result of repeated endangerment but of an 'agenda' or 'mission' that is not the police's responsibility to indulge.

- Police interviewees saw journey cams largely as a vehicle for the public to assist the police – as opposed to one more way the police can use to keep road users safe, particularly the most vulnerable ones.
- Force interviewees believed that road users should take responsibility for the quality of the evidence (location of camera, quality and length of footage, precise location and time, comprehensive statement) if they were to expect a positive outcome.
- Police interviewees were critical of road users who upload submitted footage to social media and video sharing platforms and believe this should disqualify a submitter from receiving a police resolution.
- Force interviewees generally acknowledge the need for, and value of, keeping submitters informed and of good feedback on the outcomes. They are also keen to acknowledge that, in practice, such feedback is limited, citing resourcing and statutory data protection limitations as the reasons.

The road-user perspective

- Submitters reported a range of motivations for owning and using dash cams and helmet cams, including: a perception that the roads had become more dangerous; the absence of police officers from the roads; specific incidents in which they had been involved; the need to prove liability in the event of an incident; the need to capture everyday experiences of endangerment; a general sense of civic duty/desire to improve road safety.
- Submitters were keen to distance themselves from any notion of ‘vigilantism’ or any suggestion that they were deliberately setting out to ‘catch’ other road users.
- Most submitters had learned of reporting opportunities via social media and television reporting.
- Submitters reported having their own decision-making processes about submissions, including testing an experience against their own personal criteria for danger (rather than rudeness or inconvenience) and would sometimes get a second opinion about the ‘submittability’ of an incident.
- Whilst none reported targeting specific types of road user or demographic, some reported that they would always report professional drivers for failing to maintain high standards.
- Submitters are consistently treated as witnesses rather than victims (often for reasons outside decision-makers’ control), but this does not always match submitters’ interpretations of their experiences.
- Forces report that they have insufficient resources to ‘allow’ submitters to be treated as victims as this means they would be obliged to follow their legal obligations under the Victims’ Code. Instead, submitters are considered witnesses and dealt with in line with the advisory guidance of the Witnesses Charter.
- Feedback on submissions was highly valued by submitters, who expected notification of receipt of a submission and information about the outcome. Views differed as to the importance of knowing an exact outcome, and GDPR was understood (by most) to be the reason for receiving only general positive or negative news. Submitters noted significant differences in responses from different forces.

- Submitters read off different messages from the way in which forces responded to them. Positive outcomes validated feelings of endangerment, whilst negative outcomes were often questioned and critiqued.
- Many submitters described how they adapted their future submissions based on feedback. Some did this to avoid 'wasting time' (their own, or that of the police), and our wider review of the journey cam landscape suggests that some submitters ceased submitting footage as a result of what they viewed as unsatisfactory experiences.
- Few submitters had given much thought to who was making the decisions about disposals but, when asked specifically, a range of different types of expertise were endorsed. Not all assumed that police officers would be making decisions, but others felt 'traffic cops' were the most appropriate decision-maker. A strong preference for decision-makers to have experience of cycling was expressed by many participants.
- Participants had mixed views of different disposals, with warning letters (in particular) dividing opinion. A court appearance was not an outcome that appealed, but was generally considered to be a necessary evil.
- Mixed views were expressed as to whether a submitter was more accurately a witness to, or a victim of, their experience. Submitters (particularly cyclists) reported that they felt like victims but were treated like witnesses, with strong opposition to being asked questions about their own behaviour/clothing.
- Public participants hoped that journey cam reporting would improve road safety via acting as a deterrent. They did not express concerns about a general increase in surveillance, but some reported that their own behaviour would be positively influenced by having a camera and knowing that others may also have one.
- An Omnibus population survey (commissioned from YouGov as part of the study) revealed that public views on journey cams are generally positive, and that considerations on their positive effects on road safety outweigh concerns with privacy or 'snitching'.
- The survey also indicated low levels of awareness of the existence of police initiatives to receive journey cam footage via online portals or how to use them.
- Survey results confirm that individual considerations (such as having evidence in case of a collision, for liability and insurance purposes) outweigh collective aims of road safety when it comes to motivation for journey cam use, in particular amongst drivers.
- The survey, finally, indicated a substantial reservoir of trust in the police to take action upon the submission of footage of an offence. Part of the public, however, consider that uploading footage to social media is more effective than sending it to the police to raise awareness, to find the culprit, and even to attract police attention. This is particularly the case amongst cyclists, horse riders, and users of wheelchairs and other mobility aid devices.

The wider landscape

- Interviewees from industry, government and third sector organisations with stakes in journey cams as an area of roads policing all agree on a generally optimistic forecast for the mid to long term future of these approaches, in terms of public adoption, optimisation of police processes, and broader effects on road safety.
- Under-resourcing, owing to a lack of prioritisation within and beyond policing, is consistently seen as an issue that impacts negatively on the provision of a response to journey cam submissions.
- There are both opportunities and challenges associated with technological developments in journey cam and police technologies. Work to develop technology that increases the ease of submission is likely to increase submissions. This will compel forces to rethink their approach and will probably increase interest in automating elements of the process.
- AI technology potentially represents a threat to the integrity of evidence, but may aid decision making processes.
- Campaigners for road safety, in particular for vulnerable road users, have embraced journey cams for their potential for deterrence, education and detection. They see journey cams as a groundbreaking development in that they provide an opportunity to shed light on previously ignored everyday experiences of endangerment, and are likely to continue to champion these approaches and campaign for efficiency, responsiveness and transparency in police action.
- Concerns about a general increase in public surveillance, as well as the protection of privacy and personal data, were also voiced by experts in the landscape. These are likely to continue to be part of debates around journey cams in the future.

1. Introduction

'Dashcams', 'helmet cams', 'head cams', 'handlebar cams' and 'body cams', as well as mobile phones with video recording capability, have become widely available and increasingly affordable in recent years. These are being used, by members of the public, to capture examples of road user behaviour that they deem to be unacceptable and warrant police attention. UK police forces are being sent increasing volumes of these digital recordings, estimated at the start of this project to be in excess of 6,000 a month. The limited evidence made available by forces suggests this figure has grown significantly (though no national figure is available). This appears to be a significant, and arguably unprecedented, development in terms of public endorsement of a roads policing response to dangerous behaviour on our roads, with what might be viewed as considerable deterrence potential through holding road users to account for behaviour that would otherwise not be policed. Forces initially struggled with this un-solicited demand, which arrived via a variety of methods including police station front counters, on CDs and USB sticks, via force email accounts, or was flagged up on YouTube accounts. In both the Metropolitan Police Service and the Welsh forces, decisions were made to try to impose some order on this growing area of demand by rethinking the way in which submissions could be made, in ways that improved the police's ability to handle and process the footage supplied through to disposal or a decision to take no further action.

By the start of 2022, most UK forces were operating some kind of third-party evidence submission process for incidents on the road which members of the public could use to submit footage, but these had evolved incrementally as and when forces reached the point where they felt action had to be taken. The growth of this approach has therefore been rapid, but inconsistent; one force area still does not accept footage, some are cautious about promoting their ability to do so, while others actively encourage it. Any differences in delivery and approach between different forces are likely to be exposed by the fact that the public that interacts with these systems is a mobile one – they may well experience submitting in a variety of different forces areas in ways that would not apply to most reasons for contacting the police. The engagement of the public in generating evidence for police action against dangerous road user behaviour seems an important development in roads policing where, traditionally, support from the public has not been a given (see for example Corbett, 2008; Wells, 2012, 2018). If that engagement is to continue, and if the potential road safety benefits of this development are to be realised, then a deeper understanding of the current delivery picture, as well as the views of all the various stakeholders involved, is necessary.

The HMICFRS, in its 2020 inspection of roads policing, noted that the "efficient and effective use" (HMICFRS, 2020: 6) of 'dash cam' opportunities was essential, yet little is known about what an efficient and effective system looks like. Virtually nothing was previously known about what submitters expect or demand in return for their efforts, nor how those who feature in their submissions experience justice delivered in this way. Nor do we know what policing is willing or able to deliver now, and in the future.

What follows is a short final report of the RST funded project '*How can digital evidence submissions from the public (e.g. from 'dash cams') be used more effectively to reduce road offending and improve road safety?*'. We have popularised the term 'journey cam' throughout this project to capture the fact that many submissions are not from people with dash cams (indeed they have no dashboard) so the phrase dash cam is an exclusive and inaccurate one for the project and for the force systems and processes that rely on the submission of evidence of road incidents by members of the public.

The project has carried out a review of force activities in this area, explored road user experiences, engaged in 'horizon scanning' of the broader landscape of journey cam evidence submissions to the

police, carried out a review of media, communications and publicity activities, and carried out a national survey of road users. It has, and will continue to, contribute to establishing and then influencing best practice, encouraging forms of delivery which are manageable for forces, fair and legitimate in the eyes of road users, and secure the best possible road safety outcomes.

The project's aims were as follows:

- Mapping current delivery in UK forces to establish: the volume and type of submissions; the range of processes; the challenges and opportunities facing this new area of business.
- Filling a critical gap in understanding of the public engagement with the approach, including vulnerable road users. This includes the motives of those submitting footage and their expectations in terms of a response, and is essential to ensure continued engagement.
- Engaging with those receiving an outcome, seeking to understand their experiences and perceptions of the legitimacy of the approach to maximise its deterrent effects.
- Contributing to understanding the current and future policing landscape, its challenges and opportunities, to produce recommendations for sustainable future delivery.

2. Our Approach

The project took a mixed-methods approach, involving interviews with those at the frontline in forces (n=8), those in strategic local and national roles (n=15), road users (across various modes and roles in respect of road offending and journey cam submission) (n=34) as well as other interactions with further significant voices in the journey cam landscape. We also conducted a review of media and police force communications in relation to journey cams, and commissioned a YouGov survey to explore wider public views. We also observed frontline decision-makers across four partner forces and conducted test submissions (with the agreement of the forces concerned). Both members of the research team used journey cams throughout the project and submitted genuine journey cam footage to forces on two occasions.

Whilst we attempted to engage with road users who had been the subject of submissions (who we have termed 'submitters' throughout the project) it is a fact of criminological research that offenders are a hard-to-reach group and we had limited success and were only able to interview two such individuals, both of whom had very specific experiences. As such we have been cautious in terms of where and when these perspectives have impacted on our work. We have also reviewed and considered existing literature of relevance here and used our professional judgement to carry across insights from that literature into this context, which have also been reflected in our Recommendations and other outputs. We would highlight this end-user voice as a topic for future research in this area.

We also benefitted from the advice and support of the National Road Crime Reporting Working Group (especially Andy Cox and Rich Lang), Steve Callahan and Emma Kelly from Road Safety Support, Professor Alan Tapp, Professor Sally Kyd, Dr Abi Pearson, our research advisory board, and research assistance from Lisa Snow, Megan Allison and Kate Smyth.

Whilst we were not explicitly asked to produce a written final report by the RST, we have had many requests for a document that pulls together our main findings and Recommendations and have therefore produced this document with a view to sharing it with the many people who have helped us deliver this project, or expressed an interest in the research.

Our Recommendations are based on the analysis of all our data sources, and we have supported each Recommendation with our rationale (below). A series of short reports have also been produced which explore some key areas in more detail. These cover: the results of our national survey; the desirability of a single national delivery mechanism; best practice for marketing and communicating with the public about journey cam submission processes; the issue of submitters as victims or witnesses to incidents. A 76 page interim report, containing in-depth analysis of our interviews, was also submitted to RST in January 2023. We have not reproduced this analysis here for reasons of space, but this will form the basis of some of our forthcoming academic publications and we are happy to discuss its contents with interested parties.

Further materials have also been produced to assist UK policing in delivering journey cam processes that we believe will represent best practice. These include template responses for forces to use when responding to submitters; suggested Frequently Asked Questions responses; and a summary of our recommendations.

We have framed this final report around our 18 Recommendations, and have provided a short justification of each, evidenced by our main findings from the research. An overview of the Recommendations is provided next, before each one is explored in more detail. At the end of the report we indicate the ongoing and planned pathways to impact for the research going forward.

3. Journey Cams Project Recommendations (summary)

Recommendation 1

“PCCs and Chief Officers in all forces should ensure that resourcing is sufficient and stable enough to deliver the quality of service identified in these Recommendations, including taking into account seasonal variations, and that this is not at the expense of other roads policing provision in force.”

Recommendation 2

“‘Journey cam’ is a more accurate description of the technologies which capture submissions. Referring to ‘journey cams’ in press releases, social media posts and other communications is preferable to more limited, if popular, expressions like ‘dashcams’.”

Recommendation 3

“The NPCC guidance on submissions should be reviewed and promoted to all forces, and used as a guide to the minimum level of provision expected.”

Recommendation 4

“Opportunities to increase the consistency of submitter and submittee experiences across submission system, modal type, and force boundaries should be maximised. National best practice standards should be agreed for all stages of the submission process and all forces should sign up to deliver in accordance with these standards”

Recommendation 5

“All road users who submit footage should be treated equally and fairly, guided by the principle of whether or not an offence has been committed. Care should be taken to avoid viewing or representing the driver as the ‘normal’ road user (with other forms of road use viewed as non-standard, or an exception).”

Recommendation 6

“Staff employed to make decisions about submissions, and to communicate with the public, should be able to empathise with and relate to the experiences of all types of road user, not just drivers of vehicles. Staff involved in journey cam submission processes should be trained to a consistent national standard and bring diverse experiences to the role.”

Recommendation 7

“Submissions should always be acknowledged upon receipt with submitters informed as to what will happen next, what they can expect, and in what timescales. The use of automated emails at this point should be explored to free up staff for viewing and processing footage, and notifying submitters of the outcome.”

Recommendation 8

“Schemes should consider developing a policy for engaging with road users who have submitted evidence of multiple incidents which fall below the threshold for action in dialogue

to understand their experiences and concerns and agree a way forward, potentially involving partnership activity, that is acceptable to submitters and manageable for forces.”

Recommendation 9

“Where submissions are subject to No Further Action decisions, submitters should be informed of the reasons why (for example, that there were issues with footage, or other road users could not be identified), and how these issues can be addressed in future submissions, to encourage them to stay engaged in the process.”

Recommendation 10

“Submitters should be informed of the progress and outcome of their submission with as much detail as is possible within GDPR and other constraints. Forces are encouraged to draw on templates provided on the Police Knowledge Hub to maximise consistency between forces. Statistics relating to decisions and outcomes on an aggregate level should also be made available to the public”

Recommendation 11

“Frequently Asked Questions on every force website should provide members of the public (including, but not only, those involved in submissions) with clear and consistent information about the process, timescales, how decisions are made (and by who), and what different disposals are available. Forces are encouraged to draw on FAQ templates provided on the Police Knowledge Hub to maximise consistency between forces.”

Recommendation 12

“A specific programme of work should explore the viability of a single route to submission (e.g. a national police-owned portal) so that submission experiences are consistent across the UK, but local relevance and enthusiasm is maintained.”

Recommendation 13

“A national working group should be supported from within the NPCC Roads Policing portfolio to allow for ongoing horizon scanning (for example around issues such as privacy, digital forensic standards, developing and emerging technologies, opportunities for increasing national consistency etc.) and for monitoring of trends and patterns in submissions, disposals, staffing, training and financial resourcing.”

Recommendation 14

“A simple data collection and reporting system should be established allowing forces to supply regular and accurate data to a central point in ways that are not too onerous. The national working group should commission work to explore reasons for inconsistencies in the data provided by forces, and the non-submission of data by some areas.”

Recommendation 15

“Further work could usefully explore the consequences and significance of labelling submitters as victims or witnesses, or implying that they are themselves to blame. In the meantime, decision-makers should receive training to allow them to correctly identify when an incident has a victim and why it is important to do this.”

Recommendation 16

“Once appropriately resourced, with trained personnel in place, forces should promote the opportunity to submit video recorded evidence from journey cams. Promotional work should include everyday examples of endangerment, not just extreme cases, being careful to situate dramatic footage (if used) in the context of the criminal justice disposals that resulted from the case. It should also emphasise the role of the public in supplying the data that made it possible to secure meaningful outcomes.”

Recommendation 17

“The national working group should include representation from police-led prosecutors, the CPS and HMCTS to identify and resolve national issues, and forces should work with local representatives to ensure that the process operates smoothly within and beyond the police aspect of the process.”

Recommendation 18

“Maximum use should be used of the insight contained within submissions. Work at both a force and national level should explore the potential for using journey cam data as evidence of ‘near misses’ that might be used to prevent future KSIs, via the mapping of report locations, analysis and inter-agency problem-solving approaches. All VRMs featuring in submissions should be checked for other non-compliance.”

4. Journey Cams Project Recommendations (Rationales)

Recommendation 1

“PCCs and Chief Officers in all forces should ensure that resourcing is sufficient and stable enough to deliver the quality of service identified in these Recommendations, including taking into account seasonal variations, and that this is not at the expense of other roads policing provision in force.”

- The 2020 HMICFRS report ‘Roads Policing – Not Optional’ recommended that “With immediate effect, in forces where Operation Snap (the provision of digital video footage by the public) has been adopted, chief constables should make sure that it has enough resources and process to support its efficient and effective use.”
- Part of the objective of our project was to understand what ‘enough resources’ for ‘efficient and effective use’ might look like, in particular given that roads policing as a general area of policing has tended to be under-prioritised and under-resourced in the past.
- A striking theme of our research (based on interviews with leaders in the landscape as well as participants from forces) was the view that the resourcing of this innovation should generate *additional* roads policing capacity. There was a recurring fear that it could be used as a reason to reduce other roads policing provision in force.
- Our Recommendation foregrounds the need for executive and strategic level buy-in as an enabler for most, if not all, of the subsequent Recommendations. It was our most strongly supported Recommendation during consultation and is deliberately at number 1 in our list.

Survey data and qualitative evidence from our project confirms that many forces experience fluctuations in demand throughout the year so planning to adapt to that is recommended so that teams are not overwhelmed. This may involve training (see Recommendations 6, 13 and 18) a pool of reserve staff to alleviate pressure during (for example) busier summer months *rather than* looking to remove staff from a team when submission levels are lower for a period.

As we have made clear elsewhere, the current apparent public enthusiasm for co-producing safer roads with the police must be capitalised on and forces should ensure that there is enough resource available to reward submitters for their efforts by acknowledging submissions and communicating results (see Recommendations 7, 9 and 10). If submitters become disillusioned by a lack of response or a lack of communication they may decide that it is not worth their time to submit and the road safety community will be hard-pressed to rekindle the initial enthusiasm that we see currently.

The final element of our Recommendation refers to the risk that evidence from journey cams comes to be viewed as an alternative to more established forms of policing the roads (e.g. a Roads Policing Unit, or commitment to a Road Safety Partnership), rather than as an additional opportunity signifying an overall growth in capacity. Whilst there are many reasons to be enthusiastic about journey cam submissions, this is an approach that is more likely to be applicable to certain types of problematic behaviour (mobile phone use, careless driving, ‘close-passes’, red light crossings etc) than it is for other behaviours and it cannot replace the use of properly trained and equipped roads policing officers.

Further information

HMICFRS (2020) Roads Policing: Not optional - An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/not-optional-an-inspection-of-roads-policing-in-england-and-wales/>

PACTS (2020) 'Roads policing and its contribution to road safety' <https://www.pacts.org.uk/roads-policing-and-its-contribution-to-road-safety-report-from-pacts/>

Recommendation 2

'Journey cam' is a more accurate description of the technologies which capture submissions. Referring to 'journey cams' in press releases, social media posts and other communications is preferable to more limited, if popular, expressions like 'dashcams'.

- Data supplied by forces shows that a significant percentage of submissions (the majority in some forces) are from people who are using body-cam, helmet-cam, rider-cam, handlebar-cams, doorbell or mobile phones to record the footage they submit – rather than from people using cameras mounted on a dash-board.
- Referring to submission processes as (for example) being 'for dash cam footage' is therefore not an accurate reflection of submitted content, and may give the impression that the service is only for people who have dash-cams (and hence dashboards). This is unhelpful in a context where the media tends to present some sorts of road users as in an adversarial relationship.
- This is an issue that featured strongly in our interviews with submitters, who perceived differential treatment for different types of road user (see Recommendations 4 and 5)
- We suggest that 'journey cam' be used to describe the technology going forward, perhaps with a list of the types of technology that this includes when necessary, until the term is well known.

Whilst 'dash-cam' is a well-known term, it is an inaccurate way of capturing the full potential of reporting by the public in a road safety/roads policing context. It also risks discouraging certain types of road user from submitting footage of their experiences, or of incidents they have recorded. The project collected monthly data on submissions via a survey distributed to all 43 police forces via the NRCRWG between January 2022 and May 2023. Success was limited (only 19 forces submitted some form of data and none of them submitted data for more than 11 months, with most submitting only a few month's worth of submissions data), but data is sufficient to mark some trends in terms of road use and journey cam submission. Of a total of 22,127 recorded submissions, 8,205 were made by vulnerable road users (cyclists, horse riders, pedestrians, motorcyclists or wheelchair users). For our most recent monthly data (March-April 2023), out of 3231 submissions to 12 forces (not including the force with the largest urban area), approximately a third of submissions come from vulnerable road users. Even in the forces with the lowest proportion of VRU submissions, they still accounted for around 20-25% of submissions. In some forces, a majority of submissions are not of data captured by dash cams. The term risks giving the impression that the system is there to service the needs of, and protect, some road users and not others.

As we observe in Recommendations 5 and 6, most decision makers will (by virtue of their background) have driving experience, but not all have experience of other modal types, leading to the possibility that they are more able to relate to some road user experiences than others (Cubbin, et al 2024). Given that our research found that there is a perception of "windshield bias" (Ralph and Girardeau, 2020) in policing anyway (the presumption that the car is the 'norm' in terms of road use and other mode of transport are the anomaly), the use of 'dash cam' is potentially damaging to the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of public reporting of poor road user behaviour.

Further information

Cubbin, W., van Paridon, K., Keyes, H. and Timmis, M., (2024). 'Close passes caught on camera—How knowledge and behavioural norms relate to perceptions of liability when cars overtake cyclists'. *Transportation research part F: traffic psychology and behaviour*, 100, pp.308-322.

Journey cam project 'Thematic Report 1' - Marketing, and communicating with the public about journey cams

Goddard, T.B., (2023). 'Transportation Safety Culture: Where we are and what it means'. https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1238&context=trec_seminar

Panorama (2022) *Road Rage: Cars v Bikes* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001dj03>

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Walker, I., Tapp, A. and Davis, A., (2022). 'Motornomativity: How Social Norms Hide a Major Public Health Hazard'. <https://psyarxiv.com/egnmj>

Recommendation 3

“The NPCC guidance on submissions should be reviewed and promoted to all forces, and used as a guide to the minimum level of provision expected.”

- In June 2021, and in response to the findings of the 2020 HMICFRS thematic inspection report, the NPCC Roads Policing Portfolio circulated minimum standard recommendations for the ‘Public Reporting of Road Crime’ to all forces in England and Wales.
- Forces had been extensively consulted on the proposals via the National Dashcam Working Group (now the National Road Crime Reporting Working Group).
- The NPCC recommendations noted the importance of local discretion but also the reality of cross-border travel which would expose inconsistencies in delivery.
- We found that many decision makers in teams where footage was being processed, and some individuals with more strategic roles within forces, were unaware, or only vaguely aware, of the existence of these NPCC recommendations.
- We therefore recommend that they should be updated to ensure they reflect current circumstances and the findings from this project, re-issued to forces, and that they contribute to the monitoring of provision on journey cam footage processing by the NPCC portfolio.

The NPCC recommendations included a number of issues that we also find to be of central importance to the growth and sustainability of journey cam reporting to the police, including going further than the HMICFRS recommendations in urging all forces to consider implementing a system for processing third party video footage (rather than just encouraging forces that already did so to consider efficient and effective use).

There are some areas where the NPCC Recommendations and our own Recommendations necessarily cover different issues, owing to the different scope and remit of each piece of work. We therefore support the existence of two sets of Recommendation but will endeavour to work with the NPCC and NRCRWG to ensure that no Recommendations are contradictory. We appreciate that, amongst police audiences, Recommendations issued by the NPCC are likely to carry more influence than our own but, whilst these are currently referred to as ‘minimum standard recommendations’, we have had the freedom to create aspirational ‘best practice’ ambitions.

Further information

NPCC (2021) Minimum Standard Recommendations for the Public Reporting of Road Crime (available via Police Knowledge Hub)

Recommendation 4

“Opportunities to increase the consistency of submitter and submittee experiences across submission system, modal type, and force boundaries should be maximised. National best practice standards should be agreed for all stages of the submission process and all forces should sign up to deliver in accordance with these standards”

- Road users are likely to experience policing by a range of different police forces in a way that does not apply to other crime types (for example a victim of burglary is likely to only deal with one force). Social media was also referenced by some interviewees as being a source of information about different practices in different forces.
- Perceptions of inconsistency were linked to a sense of dissatisfaction with the process and the outcomes it generated, in some case making submitters question why they took the time to record, edit and submit footage, as well as to question police commitment to safer roads.
- Participants from within forces were aware of different practices operating in other forces, which they attributed to different levels of senior level buy-in and, in turn, to different levels of available resources. None felt that inconsistency was desirable, only that it was inevitable as the approach has grown in an ad hoc fashion.
- Data collected via the NRCRWG confirms that there are significant differences in outcomes and disposals between forces, which may be a result of different levels of resourcing and training.
- As well as agreed national standards (see Recommendation 3) these concerns have fed into our recommendation that the feasibility of a national portal be explored (Recommendation 12).

For some submitters (particularly those who had captured and submitted multiple incidents), inconsistency was obvious in terms of the submission experience itself (different portals, different requirements, and different levels of engagement *between forces*) and they questioned why this was the case. Consistency in decision-making was felt to be an issue *between and within forces*. Different forces had reputations for doing things differently, with submitters speculating (rightly or wrongly) that this was because of resourcing issues, expertise of decision makers, or a perceived lack of interest in the experiences of different road user groups. As such, inconsistency threatened to undermine the approach. We have designed a package of templates specifically to assist forces in operating more consistently in ways that are user-friendly for operational staff.

Force interviewees felt that, primarily, it was the volume of submissions that would determine quality of service that submitters would (indeed, could) have, and that forces that had a better reputation in this area of delivery were those where senior force leaders and (often) Police and Crime Commissioners, were fully supportive of the idea.

Further information

Ambrose, M.L. and Arnaud, A., (2013). ‘Are procedural justice and distributive justice conceptually distinct?’. In *Handbook of organizational justice* (pp. 59-84). Psychology Press.

Journey cam project ‘Thematic Report 4’ - A national delivery approach to journey cam submission and processing – opportunities and challenges

Tyler T. R. (2017). Procedural justice and policing: A rush to judgment? *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 13, 29-53

Tyler T. R., Blader S. L. (2000). *Cooperation in groups: Procedural justice, social identity, and behavioral engagement*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

Recommendation 5

“All road users who submit footage should be treated equally and fairly, guided by the principle of whether or not an offence has been committed. Care should be taken to avoid viewing or representing the driver as the ‘normal’ road user (with other forms of road use viewed as non-standard, or an exception).”

- Across the project, participants often made a distinction between different types of road user, with cyclists and drivers often described as fundamentally different users of journey cam processes.
- As noted in Recommendation 2, data supplied by forces shows that a significant percentage of submissions (the majority in some forces) are from people who are using body-cam, helmet-cam, rider-cam, handlebar-cams, doorbell or mobile phones to record the footage they submit – rather than from people using cameras mounted on a dash-board.
- Submitters (many of whom had submitted as cyclists and as drivers) reported feeling treated differently depending on whether the source of the footage was a dash cam or other type of camera.
- In some forces, this begins with the asking of different questions at the submissions stage, such as asking cyclists and equestrians (but not other road users) what they were wearing. This was read as asking them to be accountable for their visibility, so that their entitlement to victim status could be judged.
- Some decision-makers also appeared to see cyclist use of the system primarily through a lens of the ‘frequent flyer’ - the cyclist who submitted multiple times – and who was felt to be using the system to further a personal crusade. In many cases this caused them to be seen as an illegitimate user whose footage was viewed with this preconception.

Several of our Recommendations relate to this issue, which we believe can be addressed via the training and increase in empathy referenced in Recommendation 6, where an increasing diversity of road user experience in decision-making teams is encouraged. In many cases, an assumption seemed to be made that issues on the road were either of high frequency but low seriousness, or were of low frequency but high seriousness. This is unfortunately not an accurate interpretation of road user (and particularly vulnerable road user) experiences, better described as a succession of periodic episodes of endangerment, more or less frightening, every one of which is worthy of police attention and action.

Further information

Goddard, T.B., (2023). ‘Transportation Safety Culture: Where we are and what it means’.
https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1238&context=trec_seminar

Journey cam project ‘Thematic Report 1’ – Marketing, and communicating with the public about journey cams.

Panorama (2022) *Road Rage: Cars v Bikes* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001dj03>

Ralph, K. and Girardeau, I., (2020). ‘Distracted by “distracted pedestrians”?’ *Transportation research interdisciplinary perspectives*, 5, p.100118.

Ralph, K., Goddard, T., Thigpen, C. and Davis, R., (2022). 'Intervening at the blotter, not the broadcast: improving crash coverage by targeting police press releases'. *Transportation research interdisciplinary perspectives*, 15, p.100669.

Walker, I., Tapp, A. and Davis, A., (2022). 'Motornomativity: How Social Norms Hide a Major Public Health Hazard'. <https://psyarxiv.com/egnmj>

Recommendation 6

“Staff employed to make decisions about submissions, and to communicate with the public, should be able to empathise with and relate to the experiences of all types of road user, not just drivers of vehicles. Staff involved in journey cam submission processes should be trained to a consistent national standard and bring diverse experiences to the role.”

- Our research revealed differences in expectations between different stakeholders about who would be viewing footage and deciding on outcomes and disposals.
- Submitters generally felt that decision makers should have roads policing expertise or at least a good knowledge of the law, but did not expect they would necessarily be serving police officers.
- Vulnerable road users consistently reported an expectation that decision makers would have experience, or at least an understanding, of different types of road use, not just of driving.
- Police stakeholders were more likely to report that a roads policing background was what was required, because it brought with it knowledge and understanding of traffic law and its application. However, whilst this tends to bring with it a wealth of driving experience, it does not guarantee that decision makers can and do relate to other kinds of road user experience.
- Both stakeholder groups reported that training was essential for the delivery of a good service, something which could be supported by a national training package potentially in collaboration with Road Safety Support as an ISO17025 accredited body (See also Recommendation 13).
- Staff involved in journey cam submission processes should be trained in order to comply with all relevant Codes and accreditation (for example the Forensic Regulator Act 2021 and Statutory Code (at a minimum Level 0 Awareness Training)).
- An impediment to training, and to the development of experience and consistency, was the use of officers on light duties to staff journey cam units – who would often only be assigned for short periods before moving back to frontline duties.

Linked to other Recommendations about the value placed on roads policing within forces, many police stakeholders reported issues with the level and appropriateness of staffing, and the consequences this had for the quality of service delivered. Many interviewees from within policing reported that concerns about staffing, budgets, and ‘the future’ more generally were constant, and that this impacted on their willingness and ability to commit to improvements in delivery of journey cam processes.

It was very clear from our research that there was a strong commitment to improving road safety and engaging the public via journey cam submissions, but that enthusiasm for new or additional services (such as informing submitters of outcomes) was always tempered by anxieties about being overwhelmed with workload. Submitters were aware of different levels of service and outcome across forces, and in some cases within forces, which are likely to be explained by different levels of investment in teams, and the different composition of those teams.

Further information

Cubbin, W., van Paridon, K., Keyes, H. and Timmis, M., (2024). 'Close passes caught on camera—How knowledge and behavioural norms relate to perceptions of liability when cars overtake cyclists'. *Transportation research part F: traffic psychology and behaviour*, 100, pp.308-322.

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Walker, I., Tapp, A. and Davis, A., (2022). 'Motornomativity: How Social Norms Hide a Major Public Health Hazard'. <https://psyarxiv.com/egnmj>

Recommendation 7

“Submissions should always be acknowledged upon receipt with submitters informed as to what will happen next, what they can expect, and in what timescales. The use of automated emails at this point should be explored to free up staff for viewing and processing footage, and notifying submitters of the outcome.”

- Submitters reported that an acknowledgement of their submissions was considered to be appropriate. They did *not* report wanting to know masses of detail about the outcome of their submission, such as personal information relating to the person whose behaviour they had reported.
- Interviewed submitters indicated that they were discouraged from future submissions when they had no idea if their efforts had been of any value, and several of the road users who contacted the project had given up submitting altogether after a handful of submissions for this reason.
- Automated email responses, providing they are polite, helpful and accurate, are likely to be acceptable to submitters, who understand that police resources are limited. These messages should 1) thank the submitter for the submission 2) explain what is going to happen to the submission next and 3) tell the submitter what they can expect in terms of further contact and in what timescales.
- Automated responses can provide useful information that prevents further inquiries (such as about progress) and can therefore save police time.
- We anticipate that automated emails will be appropriate for simple, generic messages *at the point of submission*. For more complex messages, such as those about decisions and outcomes, we have provided template emails (see Knowledge Hub) which can be adapted if necessary.
- A link to the force Frequently Asked Questions (see those we have suggested) may help members of the public to ‘self-serve’ answers to any queries they may have.

Some (though we appreciate not all) forces may have sufficient resources to provide an email address for inquiries that submitters and submittees do still feel are necessary. Where such resource is not available, responses should refer members of the public to FAQs, particularly if the email comes from a ‘no-reply’ inbox. In most cases, forces were actively engaged in decision making around submissions and pursuing disposals, but submitters did not always know this. Anxiety and uncertainty can lead to dissatisfaction and disengagement, so should be minimised wherever possible.

From wider research, we know that individuals value systems that give them an opportunity to engage in dialogue with the authorities and our interviews revealed how important the police views were to submitters and their sense of identity and belonging.

Further information

MacCoun, R.J., 2005. Voice, control, and belonging: The double-edged sword of procedural fairness. *Annu. Rev. Law Soc. Sci.*, 1, pp.171-201.

Wells, H., 2008. The techno-fix versus the fair cop: Procedural (in) justice and automated speed limit enforcement. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 48(6), pp.798-817.

Recommendation 8

“Schemes should consider developing a policy for engaging with road users who have submitted evidence of multiple incidents which fall below the threshold for action in dialogue to understand their experiences and concerns and agree a way forward, potentially involving partnership activity, that is acceptable to submitters and manageable for forces.”

- Many forces reported having high volumes of submissions from some individuals, and some of our submitter interviews reported having submitted footage of incidents on multiple occasions.
- This does not necessarily mean that those individuals were submitting inappropriate submissions, though this was sometimes the impression given by police participants, with a perception that experiences must either be ‘high frequency/low risk’ or ‘low frequency/high risk’.
- All submissions should be judged on their merits, and if any individuals receive frequent NFA decisions they should be engaged in dialogue to establish if there are ways to improve submissions (where they tend not to be of actionable quality). Some forces reported having done this to good effect, with both parties satisfied with the outcome.
- High frequency submissions should be explored for evidence of hot spots for particular types of road danger, not necessarily viewed as a drain on police resources
- Having a clearly defined strategy in dealing with the issues above will assist decision makers and increase the consistency of the submitter experience.

Clearly, some submitters and decision-makers differed quite significantly in terms of what they considered were ‘policeable moments’ - incidents that were worth bringing to the attention of the police. Underlying reasons for this were (from the submitter’s perspective) the wish to draw attention to everyday experiences of endangerment that they had not been able to capture and share previously, and (from the police perspective) a focus on what the law allowed them to do in terms of a response, and the need to distribute limited resources fairly. Multiple submissions that could not be actioned were seen as wasting police time and resources that could be used to process other submissions. Referrals to Frequently Asked Questions, and communicating clear decisions about why ‘NFA’ decisions were made are also likely to assist bringing submitter and decision-maker expectations into line with each other and reducing frustration on both sides.

Further information

Park, S., Kim, J., Mizouni, R. and Lee, U., (2016). ‘Motives and concerns of dashcam video sharing’. In *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 4758-4769).

Walker, P (2022, January 5th) ‘I felt powerless – so I started filming’: CyclingMikey on his one-man battle with dangerous drivers *The Guardian*, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/jan/05/filming-cyclingmikey-dangerous-drivers-mike-van-erp-motorists-britain-roads-safer>

Recommendation 9

“Where submissions are subject to No Further Action decisions, submitters should be informed of the reasons why (for example, that there were issues with footage, or other road users could not be identified), and how these issues can be addressed in future submissions, to encourage them to stay engaged in the process.”

- Data supplied by forces shows that, in some areas, large numbers of submissions are receiving ‘NFA’ decisions.
- There are likely to be various reasons for this, which require further investigation. This further exploration should be undertaken as soon as possible.
- Where submissions are NFA’d because of an issue with the quality of the recording, submitters should be advised what this was (for example that the footage contained no readable VRM, that it did not capture an offence, etc.). Forces should record where this is the reason for an NFA decision.
- Where submissions are at risk of being NFA’d because of an issue with the quality of the statement, submitters should (if time allows) be encouraged to revisit their submission, with guidance as to what the problem was. Forces should record where this is the reason for an NFA decision.
- If submissions are receiving an NFA decision because a submitter did not agree to attend court, then the submitter should be advised that this is the cause. Forces should record where this is the reason for an NFA decision.
- Where NFA decisions result from there being No Registered Keeper of the vehicle, this should also be notified to the submitter because it will explain why potentially actionable footage could not be actioned.

Data obtained from forces was incomplete, with many forces not producing any returns (often undoubtedly for resourcing reasons). The data which were supplied, however, showed high levels of inconsistency, with some forces reporting NFA decisions on almost every submission. This is something that we feel should be investigated as a matter of urgency. The very limited data we count on was obtained in this case through two six-monthly sweeps of a ‘baselining’ survey collected in September 2022 and between May and July 2023. Overall, for forces for which data has been collected, NFA has been the declared outcome in approximately two thirds of the submissions. Submissions where action has been taken result in a Notice of Intended Prosecution (NIP) in approximately 15% of the cases. Another 10% result in warning letters, and in some 5% of submissions the outcome is an educational course offer (though we should exercise caution here as these would presumably have resulted from a NIP being offered first and so may be double counted) . Less than 2% of submissions end up with court summons.

Open-ended survey comments give us some hints as to the causes for high levels of NFA outcomes. In some cases, again, lack of resources was given for NFA decisions as submissions ‘ran out of time’ - i.e. they warranted some form of disposal such as a warning letter but could not be dealt with within required legal timescales for action, so were given a NFA decision. Perceived errors on the side of submitters were also often mentioned, either of judgement (offences not evidenced in the submission

or the behaviour not reaching the prosecution threshold) or technical (no readable VRM, wrong time/date, statements and footage not consistent).

As per Recommendation 7, all submitters should receive some form of acknowledgement of their submission with as much helpful information as is possible to encourage them to continue to want to try to co-produce road safety with the police. Guidance about reasons for NFA decisions is crucial in helping to explain to submitters why something that they felt constituted a 'policeable moment' did not result in police action. Feedback at this point can produce more actionable submissions in future and reduce submitter frustration.

Recommendation 10

“Submitters should be informed of the progress and outcome of their submission with as much detail as is possible within GDPR and other constraints. Forces are encouraged to draw on templates provided on the Police Knowledge Hub to maximise consistency between forces. Statistics relating to decisions and outcomes on an aggregate level should also be made available to the public”

- During our research, interviewed submitters and force participants agreed that, where possible, it was appropriate that reporting members of the public be told the result of their submission.
- No submitters indicated that they wanted to be told any personal details of the person whose behaviour they had captured. Most wanted to be told if there had been any further action, and some wanted to be told what that action was (i.e. the type of disposal where there was one).
- Several submitters reported that they had inconsistent experiences between forces, in that they were sometimes notified of an outcome but at other times were told this was not possible.
- In some forces ‘GDPR’ was given as a reason for not informing a submitter of an outcome, but this appears to be an unfounded concern. Submitters can be told of outcomes so long as no personal information about the person receiving the disposal is shared.
- It may be that in some forces, GDPR is used as a reason for not sharing information that actually cannot be shared because of lack of resources. As above, this does not satisfy submitters who will have received information about outcomes from other forces.
- The sharing of aggregate outcome statistics (total numbers of submissions, outcomes etc) with the public is also key to demonstrating the impact of the approach to potential submitters and to deterring potential offenders (also see Recommendation 14).

Road users are unusual as recipients of police services in that they get to experience policing across a variety of forces. They are, as a result, particularly likely to notice inconsistency in practice, messaging and service. Inconsistency can cause irritation and concern, and risks submitters become disengaged from the process. It may also undermine the deterrent effect of journey cams. Communication about what a member of the public has done well, or has done wrong, is an important aspect of police legitimacy. In terms of specific feedback to submitters, explaining the reasons for an NFA decision, to a submitter, makes sense in terms of improving the quality and useability of future submissions. This could be provided via a template email (examples are included in our Resource Pack) and need not be bespoke (they could list some ‘common problems’ with submissions). A ‘gold standard’ feedback service (for example phone calls) was appreciated by submitters but forces should avoid setting a precedent that may not be sustainable when demand increases or resources are depleted. It was clear from our force interviews that, where a case goes to court, it may not be possible to establish an outcome to share with the submitter, but this should be attempted where a submitter requests this information.

We would suggest that the information to support the aggregate statistics that can be publicised by forces should be collected centrally, though it is too early to be specific about the processes and systems that would enable this. A national working group should make this issue a priority, though the variety of software being utilised across forces will present a challenge here as it does in many other policing contexts. Information regarding numbers of submissions, ‘no further outcome’

decisions, court summonses, referrals to education courses and fixed penalty notices issued should be collected at a minimum. These would provide useful data for internally comparing force practices as well as giving forces reliable data over time to share with the public.

Further information

Action Vision Zero (2023) Good practice in Northamptonshire with online reporting transparency <https://actionvisionzero.org/2023/06/21/avz-blog-good-practice-in-northamptonshire-with-online-reporting-transparency/>

MacCoun, R.J., (2005) 'Voice, control, and belonging: The double-edged sword of procedural fairness'. *Annu. Rev. Law Soc. Sci.*, 1, pp.171-201.

Wells, H., (2008) 'The techno-fix versus the fair cop: Procedural (in) justice and automated speed limit enforcement'. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 48(6), pp.798-817.

Recommendation 11

“Frequently Asked Questions on every force website should provide members of the public (including, but not only, those involved in submissions) with clear and consistent information about the process, timescales, how decisions are made (and by who), and what different disposals are available. Forces are encouraged to draw on FAQ templates provided on the Police Knowledge Hub to maximise consistency between forces.”

- Submitters and submittees did not always understand the process that they were involved in, and sometimes misunderstood why decisions had been made or what information was required.
- The provision of FAQs on force websites will help to clarify and reassure road users and may reduce the amount of queries and complaints that forces have to respond to.
- FAQs are a simple way for forces to explain how the process works and why not all submissions can be actioned, as well as what different disposals are available (and what they mean – for example, what a ‘warning’ means).
- Upfront information about what information or quality of footage is required, for example, may improve submissions and prevent road users from wasting their time submitting substandard material or statements. This would, in turn, reduce their frustration when NFA decisions were made.
- Upfront information about the timescales and deadlines that would apply to a submission would also be likely to reduce the numbers of ‘out of time’ submissions and the number of inquiries about the progress of cases.

As well as the suggestions above, we would recommend that forces supply information about the nature of different offences as this would also be likely to improve the quality of submissions. Information about the different disposal options available and the reasons why they are chosen, would also be likely to improve the perceived legitimacy of the process for submitters and submittees alike. Where a witness statement is requested as part of the submission or as a follow-up to it, the online form should be designed in a way that submitters have clear indications as to what constitutes a clear and comprehensive statement that is likely to lead to a successful outcome in court (e.g. several specific boxes should be preferred to one general open-text box). Submitters are unlikely to be aware (for example) that a full witness statement is always needed in addition to the footage, or that not ticking the box indicating a willingness to attend court will result in an NFA.

Force communications (including social media) could feature different FAQs in turn, helping to get the messages out to a wide audience.

Recommendation 12

“A specific programme of work should explore the viability of a single route to submission (e.g. a national police-owned portal) so that submission experiences are consistent across the UK, but local relevance and enthusiasm is maintained.”

- Issues of consistency were very apparent across this work, being raised by submitters, force participants, the media review and by the survey data collected. This was supported by our own test submission experiences.
- Submitters noted significant inconsistencies in experience and outcome both between and within forces. This user group is one that is particularly able to observe inconsistencies as road users, by definition, are mobile and may experience policing in a variety of force areas.
- Whilst almost all forces now accept journey cam submissions, they do so in ways that are primarily informed by local resourcing and culture.
- Inconsistencies included: perceived differential treatment for different road user groups; different feed-back practices and information about the police’s ability to share outcome information; different expectations and demands on submitters; different requirements in terms of footage; different decision-making criteria; different outcomes.
- Inconsistency can lead to perceptions of unfairness, injustice and illegitimacy. For submitters this is likely to lead to disengagement. The longer-term ideal is therefore that the submission experience is consistent from start to finish, wherever and whenever a road user makes a submission, or is the subject of a submission (see ‘Best Practice’).
- A single national portal, operating as a consistent starting point for all submissions (before referral on to the appropriate force) would improve consistency, if long term funding could be identified. This portal may be ‘shop front’ only, with decisions and correspondence remaining a local function within force. Our research included engaging with other similar national roads policing projects to learn from their ways of working.

The concepts of consistency and trust are central to understanding how the police are viewed. Research shows that consistency of experience is important to a sense of procedural justness of the police which in turn links to perceived legitimacy. When authorities are seen as legitimate, citizens are more likely to comply with them. Inconsistent treatment can have the opposite effect. For example, some submitters who contacted the project report had decided they would submit footage to some forces but no longer to others.

We recommend that a piece of work be commissioned to explore the feasibility of a national portal (offering a consistent front-end user experience) to be combined with local communications in the media, local decision-making, and local correspondence with submitters and submitters. This is also more likely to fit with the local delivery of justice via CPS and HMCTS. Funding for such a portal is obviously an issue, and a specific programme of work should creatively explore all options.

Further information

Journey cam project 'Thematic Report 4' - A national delivery approach to journey cam submission and processing – opportunities and challenges

Ruddell, R. and Trott, K., 2022. Perceptions of trust in the police: a cross-national comparison. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, pp.1-16.

Recommendation 13

“A national working group should be supported from within the NPCC Roads Policing portfolio to allow for ongoing horizon scanning (for example around issues such as privacy, digital forensic standards, developing and emerging technologies, opportunities for increasing national consistency etc.) and for monitoring of trends and patterns in submissions, disposals, staffing, training and financial resourcing.”

- As the journey cam submission process matures (and numbers of submissions increase) it is vital that there is some sort of central hub of expertise overseeing this. Consistency is one of the biggest challenges facing this development (see Recommendations 4, 10 and 11) and this can be improved by a central group with national representation.
- Force participants in the research stressed how valuable the NRCRWG has been as a source of advice and support for decision-makers operating at the front line of this innovation, providing a forum to work towards a more consistent and legitimate approach.
- A central group should be appropriately resourced (potentially with support from the NPCC portfolio) and with representation from all forces (possibly via regional groupings if appropriate).
- As well as frontline decision-makers, the group should be linked-in to national strategic decision makers (e.g. NPCC Roads Policing Portfolio), representatives from the wider criminal justice system (e.g. CPS, courts, police led prosecutors, forensics), other national leads (e.g. from the NPCC DPC portfolio) academics, and (as and when appropriate) be able to tap into the expertise of particular interest groups such as manufacturers and particular road user groups. The appropriateness of one practitioner and one strategic group could be considered.

Given the importance of statistics to understanding issues such as resourcing, future challenges and areas of inconsistent practice, the group should be the central repository for statistics relating to (e.g.) submissions, disposals, road user types, resourcing and funding and be able to monitor trends and foresee challenges (see Recommendation 14). It would also have a central role in supporting the design, and subsequent introduction, of training for decision-makers, we suggest in collaboration with Road Safety Support (Recommendation 6). The group should also oversee the delivery of the Recommendations proposed from this project, tapping in to the NPCC portfolio, Roads Policing Review and other opportunities as appropriate. Movement towards exploring and potentially delivering a national delivery model (Recommendation 12) should be led from within this group, combining national oversight and local expertise as well as exploring possible finance options.

Recommendation 14

“A simple data collection and reporting system should be established allowing forces to supply regular and accurate data to a central point in ways that are not too onerous. The national working group should commission work to explore reasons for inconsistencies in the data provided by forces, and the non-submission of data by some areas.”

- Increasing the consistency, and arguably the effectiveness and legitimacy, of this approach depends on accurate and comprehensive data being obtained from the frontline.
- Whilst work has been undertaken to increase and standardise reporting of various data from forces, there is still some way to go in terms of being able to generate a reliable picture of journey cam submissions in the UK. This information is crucial to drive appropriate planning for the future.
- Large numbers of forces do not complete their monthly returns, and very few forces complete them consistently. Time pressures are generally given as the reason for not providing data.
- Work should take place with forces that have nil returns, or apparently anomalous returns (e.g. high numbers of ‘other’ selections, or of NFA outcomes) to establish why the current recording processes are not working for them, or why they are reporting the outcomes that they are.
- The NRCRWG (see Recommendation 13) should take the lead on compiling and analysing the data, and explore (with forces) ways to capture the information *automatically* from force systems. Any national solution should be designed with the capturing of data built-in from the outset.
- No methods of data capture should be introduced without consultation with forces to establish their appropriateness and useability.
- Dedicated resource should be made available to analyse the data generated and prepare it for discussion at appropriate forums such as the NRCRWG and NPCC roads policing portfolio.

Arguably, future delivery (including a possible national solution) should be built on this data and should not happen until a solid picture of existing practice is built. The data, once produced, should be used to approach national and local issues, and also to publicise the outcomes that members of the public have contributed to (see example below and Recommendation 10). This would increase awareness of journey cam reporting opportunities (something that our national survey indicated was low), reassure submitters that the approach does deliver outcomes (even when their own submissions perhaps did not), and feasibly prevent forces from receiving as many FOI requests for data.

Further information

Action Vision Zero (2023) ‘Good practice in Northamptonshire with online reporting transparency’ Available at <https://actionvisionzero.org/2023/06/21/avz-blog-good-practice-in-northamptonshire-with-online-reporting-transparency/>

Journey cam project ‘Thematic Report 4’ - A national delivery approach to journey cam submission and processing – opportunities and challenges

Recommendation 15

"Further work could usefully explore the consequences and significance of labelling submitters as victims or witnesses, or implying that they are themselves to blame. In the meantime, decision-makers should receive training to allow them to correctly identify when an incident has a victim and why it is important to do this."

- Whether or not submitters were appropriately described, and treated, as victims or witnesses, was one of the most contentious issues identified in this research.
- Many submitters (often, but not exclusively, vulnerable road users) were clear that they had been victims of incidents, some referring to the camera as the witness.
- Some police participants were absolutely clear that submitters were witnesses to incidents and therefore should not be treated as victims (often because of the absence of any physical harm), while others were concerned at the workload implications of recognising submitters as victims.
- Defining a submitter as a victim would mean that the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales (2020)* ('The Victim's Code') applied to their experiences. The Victim's Code identifies a victim as a person "who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence" and this would appear consistent with what many submitters (and particularly cyclists) reported. Victims are entitled to receive information about the outcome of their case.
- However, other submitters (across all modal types) were clear that they considered themselves to be witnesses to incidents, often that involved other people. The Witness Charter only represents guidance on what *should* happen to a witness, including on the issue of being kept informed.
- Some of our force participants, including decision makers, operated on the basis that incidents were *either* high frequency/low risk, *or* low frequency/high risk. Submitters were keen to challenge this idea and described the everyday experiences of endangerment captured by their journey cams.
- Certain road user groups (namely cyclists and equestrians) are asked by some forces, when submitting, to describe their clothing or otherwise account for their visibility on the road. This provoked strong opposition from individuals who knew that this was not something other kinds of road users (those with 4 wheels) were asked, and was taken to imply some blame for any incident might lie with the person submitting the footage, simply by virtue of their mode of travel.
- Decision-makers require training to enable them to identify when a submitter is appropriately labelled and treated as a victim.

As journey cams capture a variety of incidents. it is by no means logical that one term (and therefore one subsequent experience of policing) captures all submissions. It would seem there are four hypothetical options for addressing the issue of labelling submitters as witness: 1) All submitters are classed as victims (this would not accurately represent reality), 2) all submitters are classed as witnesses (likewise, this would not be accurate), 3) submitters select which label they think most accurately captures their experience (this was not supported by most participants in the research – see Thematic Report 3) and 4) the police select the label that they think applies. We suggest that

decision-makers be trained to recognise where and when the label of victim or witness is appropriate, based on the evidence in the footage and potentially on submitter input, and to understand what this means for ongoing engagement with the submitter (or other identified parties).

The issue of labels also arose when both submitters and decision makers discussed the fact that submission portals often included a question about what the road users was wearing *if* the road user was a cyclist or horse rider. This was taken to imply that sometimes vulnerable road users were responsible for what happened to them. Drivers were not asked this question.

We recommend a specific package of work investigating this issue in more depth, with a view to informing a training package for decision-makers, including training to ensure they are able to correctly identify when an incident has a victim and why it is important to do this. This should form part of national best practice and the training required for those in decision-making roles. We also recommend that submitters are not asked to indicate what clothing or equipment they were wearing because this implies a level of responsibility for incidents – something which should not be part of the criminal justice process.

Further Information

Cubbin, W., van Paridon, K., Keyes, H. and Timmis, M., 2024. Close passes caught on camera—How knowledge and behavioural norms relate to perceptions of liability when cars overtake cyclists. *Transportation research part F: traffic psychology and behaviour*, 100, pp.308-322.

Fairchild, K., 2015. “But look at what she was wearing!”: Victim blaming and street harassment. In *Gender, Sex, and Politics* (pp. 22-32). Routledge.

Ministry of Justice (2013) ‘The Witness Charter’ Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264627/witness-charter-nov13.pdf#:~:text=The%20Witness%20Charter%20sets%20out%20the%20standards%20of,are%20helping%20to%20ensure%20that%20justice%20is%20done.

Ministry of Justice (2006) ‘Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales (Victim's Code)’ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime-in-england-and-wales-victims-code>

Journey cam project ‘Thematic Report 3’ - ‘Submitters of journey cam footage as victims, witnesses... or offenders’

Recommendation 16

“Once appropriately resourced, with trained personnel in place, forces should promote the opportunity to submit video recorded evidence from journey cams. Promotional work should include everyday examples of endangerment, not just extreme cases, being careful to situate dramatic footage (if used) in the context of the criminal justice disposals that resulted from the case. It should also emphasise the role of the public in supplying the data that made it possible to secure meaningful outcomes.”

- Only 13% of a representative sample of UK adults were aware of ‘Op Snap’ and similar submission opportunities, but 45% of the sample said they would consider buying a journey-cam in future so there is significant potential for growth in this area of policing and road safety.
- Low awareness among the public also means that the deterrent potential of people having journey cams will be limited. Promoting the use of journey cam submissions by the police should increase submissions as well as deterring unsafe driving.
- However, if submissions exceed the capacity to deal with them, and quality of service is impacted, then submitters are likely to disengage from the process.
- Forces should ensure their decision-making teams are engaged with their corporate communications teams and consider using professional web/content designers for their communications.
- Whilst it may attract significant numbers of views, footage shared via the mainstream or social media should not sensationalise the content. Forces should seek to get the balance right between *attracting attention* and spilling over into *inadvertently glorifying aggressive driving*.
- Dramatic footage may be shared in parallel with campaigns being clear about what constitutes driving that breaks the law. All footage must relate to closed cases.

Footage used, and cases referred to, should include a range of different road user types and road user experiences. Focusing on excessive speeds or extreme behaviours may encourage drivers to believe that they themselves are not the problem as their dangerous and/or illegal behaviours are ‘not as bad’ as those that they see shared as examples of journey-cam footage. This is also an opportunity to show ‘close passes’ from the perspective of the rider – something many drivers will not have experienced.

References to numbers of people killed or seriously injured (ideally at a relatively local level) should be included, with a ‘call to action’ that empowers road users to want to make a difference (and to believe that they can). Posting aggregate data about submissions and outcomes can reduce FOI requests to forces, but forces should be prepared to respond to criticism if outcomes are perceived to be insufficient (see below). Communications should regularly emphasise the benefits to the submitter of sending footage and regularly test different promotional approaches (for example media type, length of videos, message tone of voice [e.g. authoritative vs warm /partnership], branding/design features, straplines [see it, snap it, send it vs others, etc])

Further Information

Fischer, P., Greitemeyer, T., Kastenmüller, A., Vogrincic, C. and Sauer, A., (2011) 'The effects of risk-glorifying media exposure on risk-positive cognitions, emotions, and behaviors: a meta-analytic review'. *Psychological bulletin*, 137(3), p.367.

Journey cam project 'Thematic Report 1' - Marketing, and communicating with the public about journey cams

Road CC (2023, April 13th) "*Totally unacceptable*": Cyclists react to concerning close pass prosecution figures <https://road.cc/content/news/cycling-live-blog-13-april-2023-300567>.

Recommendation 17

“The national working group should include representation from police-led prosecutors, the CPS and HMCTS to identify and resolve national issues, and forces should work with local representatives to ensure that the process operates smoothly within and beyond the police aspect of the process.”

- Our research deliberately engaged with stakeholders beyond the police context as there would be little point devising and implementing best practice for policing if cases subsequently failed once they progressed into the broader criminal justice system.
- Some challenges were reported to us regarding communication with the CPS, including inconsistencies in the way different prosecutors responded to journey cam footage submissions and experiences of regular ‘knock-backs’.
- Interviews with the CPS revealed that many submissions were dealt with via police-led prosecutions and the Single Justice Procedure (something which decision makers did not appear to know), and that in these cases the actual footage would not be seen by a Magistrate. In these circumstances the witness statement was taken as the evidence, and in some cases it was not sufficient.
- Our research suggested that there was considerable confusion within the process about who did what and why, and the inclusion of more CJS partners in a working group would seem a logical way to address this and to prevent misunderstandings from impeding the effectiveness of the journey cam approach.

Overall, our research found considerable confusion about the end-to-end criminal justice journey that a journey cam submission would take, particularly when that journey took it outside of the specific policing context. Closer links between the NRCRWG and other criminal justice partners would enable the group to provide specific guidance and updates to forces, and forces to feedback their concerns and issues. It may be that, as suggested in Recommendation 13, two groups should be convened, with one considering more national, strategic issues and the other offering a valuable source of support and insight for decision-makers. If this approach is adopted, then there should be some consistent membership across both groups to ensure that learning and insight is appropriately shared between the two.

Further information

Bardens, J (2014) ‘Charging decisions and police-led prosecutions’ House of Commons Library Research Briefing <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06840/SN06840.pdf>.

Criminal Justice and Courts Act (2015) *Section 48*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/2/notes/division/3/3/1#:~:text=The%20single%20justice%20procedure%20provides%20that%20cases%20may,defendant%20would%20therefore%20not%20have%20to%20attend%20court.>

Journey cam project ‘Thematic Report 4’ - A national delivery approach to journey cam submission and processing – opportunities and challenges

Recommendation 18

“Maximum use should be used of the insight contained within submissions. Work at both a force and national level should explore the potential for using journey cam data as evidence of ‘near misses’ that might be used to prevent future KSIs, via the mapping of report locations, analysis and inter-agency problem-solving approaches. All VRMs featuring in submissions should be checked for other non-compliance.”

- Most forces require a submitter to place a ‘pin’ on a map to show the location of the incident they are reporting. Date, time and weather conditions are also recorded. This information should be collated and mapped and the insights used to explore whether there are engineering, education or enforcement options that could prevent a near-miss location becoming a KSI location
- Some forces currently check the insurance, MoT, VED and other offending status of vehicles appearing in footage to ensure that all offending behaviour is dealt with.
- Work should be commissioned to explore the wider potential of this sort of information, and links made to existing work in this area.
- This is in addition to the keeping of records of VRMs featuring in submissions to establish whether there are repeat offenders (we assume this already takes place)

Journey-cam footage potentially provides a valuable source of data in respect of ‘near misses’ and offending correlations that would not normally be known to the police or other authorities. When submitting journey-cam footage, the submitter is usually asked to mark the location of the incident with a virtual pin, making it easy to map. Complemented by the work suggested in Recommendation 13, this process may highlight locations where incidents of a particular type are occurring repeatedly and may enable the responsible authorities to intervene to take appropriate action and prevent a near-miss from becoming a KSI. The date, time and weather conditions of reported incidents could also be used in a similar way, either by forces, or via some commissioned local or national research. We also consider it best practice for forces to check VRMs against other databases that may reveal further offences. Finally, the VRMs of vehicles, as well as their registered keepers, should be logged to establish if there are any patterns or frequent offenders that can be identified. This applies to forces who use warning letters as well as more formal disposals, as our research shows that warnings had low levels of support (submitters feared that a driver could accrue multiple warnings with no real outcome).

Further information

Agilysis (2023) NX-DriveCam and Guardian <https://www.dropbox.com/s/67xn2nxkyouc1t/NX-DriveCam%20%26%20Guardian.mp4?dl=0>

Branion-Calles, M., Nelson, T. and Winters, M., (2017) ‘Comparing crowdsourced near-miss and collision cycling data & official bike safety reporting’ *Transportation research record*, 2662(1) p1-11.

de Rome, L., Brown, J., Baldock, M. and Fitzharris, M. (2018) ‘Near-miss crashes & other predictors of motorcycle crashes:’. *Traffic injury prevention*, 19 (sup2), p.20-26.

Journey cam project ‘Thematic Report 4’ - A national delivery approach to journey cam submission and processing – opportunities and challenges

Nelson, T.A., Denouden, T., Jestico, B., Laberee, K. and Winters, M., (2015). 'BikeMaps. org: a global tool for collision and near miss mapping'. *Frontiers in public health*, 3, p.53.

Park, J.I., Kim, S. and Kim, J.K., (2023). 'Exploring spatial associations between near-miss and police-reported crashes: The Heinrich's law in traffic safety'. *Transportation research interdisciplinary perspectives*, 19, p.100830.

5. Next steps

We continue to work closely with the National Road Crime Reporting Working Group to ensure that the findings of this research are disseminated to and considered by those who can enact change in this landscape. The Group applied for, and was awarded, National Highways funds to progress exploration of a national solution for journey cam submissions and processing, as a result of our findings around inconsistent delivery and the risks associated with it. The report authors are named contributors to this next stage of work (currently awaiting the transfer of funds) and will remain closely involved in how that work is taken forward. We see the NRCRWG as the main pathway to impact for this project, alongside work with NRPOII and the NPCC more generally.

We also understand that, in the near future, all 43 forces will be in a position to accept and process journey cam submissions, and we are supporting the final force in its journey towards delivery.

We have begun to disseminate our findings to both practitioner audiences via presentations to the UKROEd/NPCC and Road Safety GB conferences and NRPOII (the latter receiving presentations at their Strategic National meeting and via a well-attended webinar for frontline members of the group). Once signed-off by the RST we will move forward on our plans to share our reports and other resources via the Police Knowledge Hub and update the College of Policing Research Map and Practice Bank.

We will also progress writing for academic audiences, with papers planned for submission to high-impact peer-reviewed journals.