

Chief Superintendent Louise Blakelock
Head of Road Policing Scotland
Police Scotland

25 March 2021

CC: Humza Yousaf MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Scottish Government

Dear Chief Superintendent Blakelock

Joint letter calling on Police Scotland to introduce a camera footage submission and reporting system for Scotland

We are writing to you as organisations who are concerned about the safety of all road users but especially vulnerable road users.

Road safety is an issue that affects everyone in Scotland, but it is especially concerning for cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders and motorcyclists. The safety of people using the roads must be improved to halt the tragedy of deaths and serious injury, but also to encourage more people to adopt active lifestyles.

Last year Cycling UK in Scotland wrote to you to request that Police Scotland introduces, at the earliest opportunity, a single easy to use camera footage submission system which all road users can have confidence in. This online system is sometimes referred to as third-party reporting.

Our 33 organisations are now joining together to call for an online camera footage submission and reporting system to be introduced in Scotland as soon as possible. We are urging Police Scotland to prioritise making it as easy as possible for people to report road crime in Scotland.

We also request a meeting with you to discuss why we believe this helpful and long overdue tool is vital to meeting the new targets set out in Transport Scotland's new Road Safety Framework.

Camera footage submission and reporting is in common use across the UK, such as via the National Dash Cam Safety Portal (NDSP), and is helping people to report road crime in 40 of 45 police force areas. It is effective in leading to prosecutions - an FOI request by Cycling UK found 36% of reports across 13 forces resulted in some form of action (7% prosecution, 7% FPN, 17% NDORS course, 5% warning). Operation Snap in Wales saw action of some form taken in 58% of cases between December 2019 and January 2021. Furthermore, experience in other forces shows that on average it cuts 8-12 hours of police time per case by using civilian staff to assess the video evidence and reducing the workload of uniformed officers.

Not only is online camera footage reporting commonly used and beneficial for the police, it also makes it easier for people to report cases of irresponsible and dangerous driving. Online systems, such as the one provided freely by Nextbase, gives people confidence to report an incident without having to directly contact police, cutting concerns about 'wasting police time'. This reporting system also increases consistency of triaging footage because footage can be assessed by dedicated civilian staff who quickly become expert in viewing footage and recognising when offences have occurred.

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Patron: Her Majesty the Queen President: Jon Snow Chief Executive: Paul Tuohy

Cycling UK is a trading name of Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no: 25185.
Registered as a charity in England and Wales charity no: 1147607 and in Scotland charity no: sco42541.

Police Scotland is set to introduce a new Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC) this year, however, we do not believe that it will provide the same advantages as a dedicated camera footage submission and reporting system.

Roads police officers and fixed cameras cannot be everywhere on the roads – dashcam and helmetcam sales continue to grow and their use provides added eyes on the road and can assist in tackling many of the dangerous and careless driving behaviours which are traditionally difficult to enforce. Combined with an Operation Snap style public awareness campaign their use can create a valuable deterrence, while also helping police to identify near miss and offence hotspots.

We are convinced that an online camera footage submission and reporting system would be effective in Scotland, make the police's job easier, deter careless and dangerous driving, and help vulnerable road users feel safer on our roads. Perhaps, as important is that the system empowers victims and makes it simple for them to report and be listened to. A camera footage system would be good news for all responsible road users and the police. The only bad news would be for irresponsible and law-breaking road users who would be more effectively held to account.

We urge you to introduce a camera footage submission and reporting system as soon as possible, either via the NDSP or as part of DESC. We hope that we can meet with you soon to discuss these matters.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



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Enc: Cycling UK in Scotland Briefing: Online camera footage submission and reporting systems

Logos of 33 signatories



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