

Evaluation of Keep Your Wheels

Project details

Full project title: Evaluation of Keep Your Wheels (KYW)

Sponsor: Bristol City Council

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Background

Young riders are more likely to be injured or die while riding a moped than when walking, cycling or travelling by car. This group, particularly teenage boys, lack practical knowledge, road craft and defensive riding skills. They may also use protective clothing incorrectly or fail to wear it altogether.

Keep Your Wheels is an initiative aimed at riders aged between 16 and 24. It promotes an exchange, whereby after 12 months of meeting certain behavioural criteria (like submitting paperwork and completing questionnaires) and avoiding transgressions, members are rewarded with a cash incentive of £100.

It has recently been developed to include more face-to-face elements like Karting sessions and observed rides, to link to social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter and to offer equipment discounts from popular retailers.

In October 2010, Bristol City Council commissioned BSMC to undertake research into young moped and scooter riders and their attitudes and behaviour towards a safety scheme called Keep Your Wheels (KYW).

The research

The research team was asked to address to answer the following questions:

- Can we reach a better understanding of our 16-24 yr old target group?
- Can we gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of KYW?

We undertook a multi-method study to answer these questions starting with a review of academic literature, published reports and secondary data. Then, we analysed two datasets of current and past scheme members. Finally, we conducted two pieces of primary research: first, an online questionnaire to all current and past members; and second, a qualitative study of young riders, their parents and 'experts' on the topic.

Results

The findings of the research indicated that the target audience for the scheme should be limited to 16 and 17 year olds who have just taken their CBT (Compulsory Basic Training) but have yet to obtain their full license.

We found two distinctive segments of 16-17 year olds: '*sensible but inexperienced*', who may be still quite strongly influenced by their parents; and '*reckless risk takers*' who are often located in relatively deprived communities.

As it had been designed, KYW was highly unlikely to reach the 'hard core' of reckless risk takers, partly because they were often riding without the appropriate documentation and thus would not be eligible for membership, and partly because the scheme as it was designed would not attract and engage this audience.

We therefore suggested that for this group an entirely separate scheme was needed. To tackle the extreme behaviour exhibited by this group (such as throwing off helmets to avoid police pursuit) a more intensive, community-based programme was needed with credible mentors to deliver the message, such as individuals who deliver on another of the Road Safety team's projects: [Wheels Skills and Thrills](#) (WST).

However, we felt the '*sensible but inexperienced*' group should be responsive to the existing KYW design – but the research findings strongly suggested that important changes will be needed.

A number of issues came to light, which we summarised as a set of problems residing in the web-centricity of Keep Your Wheels. In its original form, the scheme was at risk of encouraging a 'box ticking' mentality in which members completed the tasks set and collected their rewards, but cognitive learning and behaviour change were not achieved.

We recommended that the scheme was re-balanced such that a stronger face-to-face element directly influenced the audience, with the web presence as a back-up.

With an awareness of the financial and practical constraints, we recommended four developments to KeepYourWheels.com:

- Starting the scheme with a face-to-face meeting as soon after the CBT was obtained as possible
- Working with advanced riding experts to link the quizzes to the objectives
- Using the karting session as an opportunity for an interim skills assessment and feedback session
- Conclude the scheme with a final skills assessment and feedback

In its original form, it was difficult to measure what impact the scheme made upon the road safety of these young riders as it only measured engagement with the website but did not allow an understanding of changes to riding skills. With the changes proposed, the scheme would allow evidence to be collected about how KYW changed behaviour.