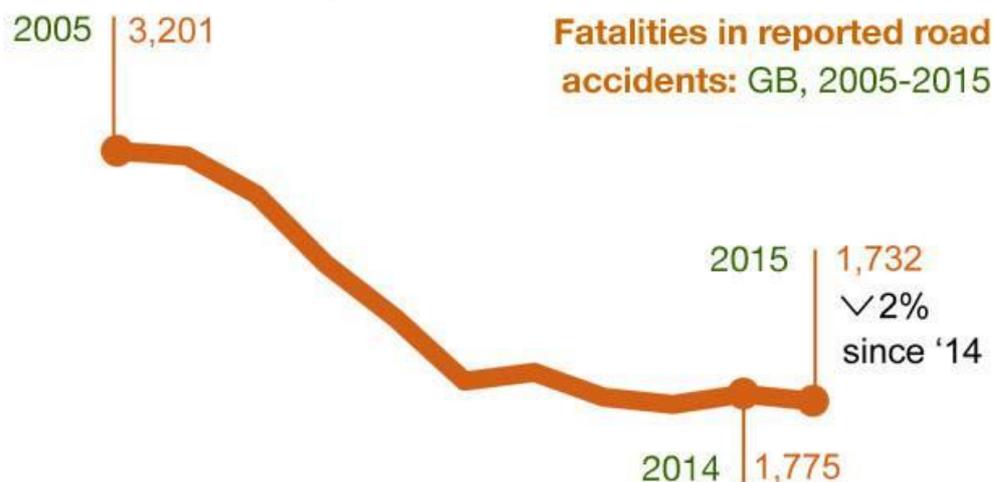


CUTS IN ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION WILL LEAD TO MORE DEATHS ON THE ROAD, FEARS THE LONDON ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL



The UK's reputation for being a world leader in reducing road casualties is slipping away, says the London Road Safety Council (LRSC).

Data shows the tremendous downward trend in fatalities achieved from 2005 to 2010 is bottoming out, and the LRSC fears that this is as a result of a continuing decline in the funding of all resources aimed at making the roads safer, including local authority road safety education staff, especially in London.

The LRSC regularly takes a census of road safety staff in the 33 London authorities, and since 2010 this shows a two-thirds reduction in the number of officers directly involved in road accident prevention.

Cllr Wendy Brice-Thompson, chair of the LRSC, said: "We are alarmed by the cutbacks that have affected all strands of casualty reduction work in London. Not only are there fewer officers directly involved in traditional education, training and publicity (ETP) work, with many of them sidelined to focus on modal shift behaviour change work.

"There are also funding changes that have affected highway maintenance, accident investigation and prevention (AIP) work and roads policing too, all combining to a bottoming out of the progress we had been making as leaders in casualty reduction work.

"This week the experienced team of three road safety officers at Redbridge Council are leaving due to redundancy, and we understand the Council intends to recruit a more junior, part-time officer to cover their responsibilities. This does not pass the common-sense test, when you consider the needs of the Redbridge community. In addition, we see an erosion of

Press release - 29 June 2017

the School Crossing Patrol service in many areas, which, at a time when such effort is being made to encourage more children to walk to school, seems bizarre.”

The LRSC believes that there should be a change in the legislation detailing the statutory duty that authorities have for road casualty prevention. “We would like to see Ministers prescribing the ratios of staff to population, and suggest one full time equivalent (FTE) for every 100,000 of population. Other solutions include direct government funding for this work, which has proven to work and which continues to attract much interest from other parts of the world.”

The LRSC has recently received delegates from Kenya, South Korea and Hong Kong, wishing to share in knowledge of the success previously achieved in reducing casualties in London.

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