

Providing Professional Development opportunities at national and organisational levels – an NGO response to road safety capacity building

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Although mature in higher income economies, road casualty reduction is, as a set of disciplines, an evolving profession. We are continually looking for, and finding, new ways to help us understand the behaviour of drivers, how they interact with each other, their vehicles and the built environment - and how we can influence those interactions.

RSGB represents road casualty reduction professionals in U.K. highway authorities tasked with the investigation, analysis and treatment of road collisions primarily, though not exclusively, through behavioural change. This paper will outline the RSGB response to the need to stock-take national skills and knowledge following a period of economic downturn in which corporate intelligence has been lost, and our knowledge and understanding of what works has expanded.

RSGB undertook a skills gap analysis of its membership throughout the UK, appraising the internal capacity of member organisations to deliver road safety services through informed, trained and supported staff. The need for targeted knowledge transfer – through formal professional development services and ad hoc knowledge sharing – was identified and RSGB sought to address this through the RSGB Academy and Road Safety Knowledge Centre.

This paper will reference the twin examples of RSGB's Road Safety Practitioner Foundation Course and the national support network for Road Safety Analysts within its wider context of provision. They will help to illustrate the practical steps that can be taken to provide both broad, entry level, knowledge and understanding for practitioners and managers - and also the specialised support required by Analysts (a role otherwise in danger of lacking structure and consistency of approach, or failing to achieve the required key role in 'intelligent client' team structures).

Reference will also be made to the sustainability of offering professional development and knowledge transfer - and the need to support career pathways as well as core skills.