

PE1223/GGG

Petitioner Letter of 31 October 2014

PETITIONS COMMITTEE

I welcome the safety trail in Glasgow, however city traffic has an average speed of 10 to 15 mph, where as rural roads its 60 passing a school bus. Hardly a very fair comparison.

However I fail to see the need for another safety trial, basically covering the same subjects as already been covered in the Aberdeenshire Trail a few years back , it cant be anything else, it is blatantly obvious that School bus safety is compromised often, as it differs between LAs.

Transport Scotland could of pursued this when the first petition started, they choose to ignore it.

As I am told time & time again, by LAs & bus operators.

THESE ARE ONLY GUIDELINES, they are not law, so until it is, we will not change

Aberdeenshire who have progressed school bus safety are still having problem, only a few weeks back had to terminate a bus company contract over safety infringements.

Not all school buses yet carry the new sign , 2 years plus on., plus promises to a committee meeting almost 2 years ago.

Nor do LAs have in place any proper penalties, Aberdeenshire penalty points run out within a very small time window. So the chance of being fined etc is slim, unless a serious offense has occurred within a tight set period

We are one of the main stakeholders in this, yet all these meeting Transport Scotland has with LAs & various departments exclude us, yet we have so much to give.

We were promised at a meeting with Mike Penning, we would be included in meetings as a main shareholder, and it's us who have to bear the pain not LAs One meeting a few years back now, with Graeme Robertson, held in the café at Aberdeen's Rail Station.

He then moved onto Woodhill House for a comfy meeting with the council.

Great meeting in a public place, where every answer was basically NO.

No official notes taken, pointless exercise & a sop to us.

Strangely enough, after media interest today 31 st October, I got a phone call from Transport Scotland, how strange, they would have been better not to really making it, so very obvious.

Basic safety does not exist, various authorities have the wrong sign fitted to the back, some none, & viva versa.

Was in Fife during the Ryder cup, lost count of coaches, buses carrying adult spectators, safety signs still showing, outside school hours. Signs placed behind glass which affects reflection. Also behind tinted glass which is worse

Until we get the very basics sorted, nothing is going to work

Transport Scotland's tool kit, which was trumpet blown by them, does not work.& will not work until legally enforced.

Nor will it if LAs have the choice to ignore the them & they do, as it's only guidance. There has to be a law that provides school children with adequate safety protection.

Making the bus visible to approaching to drivers, both front & rear, signs can be any size. So why do they use the smallest!!

Why are always the minimum safety standards instead of maximum ones?

Extra high level signs can be fitted

Transport Scotland lays out it's hoped for policy in its letter. Please ignore the spin.

The findings from the evaluation of the pilot will help Transport Scotland and our road safety partners take future considerations on the issue of school transport signage, in order to more fully discern best practice in this area. We foresee this initiative making a valuable contribution to our efforts to keep pupils safe on journeys to and from the classroom, responsibility which we all share.

It's taken from 2005 to get to this stage. They said basically this year's back & have had 10 years to sort it. They have not.

WE NEED VISABILITY TO ENSURE A SCHOOL BUS IS INSTANTLY RECOGNISED AS SUCH.

We don't have to follow Wales, our Government has the ability to change things themselves, but Wales have adopted Children's rights under EU law, has Scotland ?

UK government already tell us that through contracts extra high lights can be fitted, larger signs can be fitted, illuminated signs showing a steady light can be fitted, that safety signs should not be shown on any school bus not carrying children.

Why has this not been implemented? Why had Transport Scotland failed to ensure this is now in place, it can be done, now, tomorrow!

In Northern Ireland, two warning lights and a warning sign must be fitted to the front and rear of the bus so as to be plainly visible to road users ahead of the bus and to the rear of the bus

Once again school bus safety falls, once again we are relying on the Scottish Parliament to ensure every pupil had the same right to safety, regardless of where they stay.

STV North tonight had an interview with me today

On the interview it showed, if you view it, taken today, school buses leaving Mackie Academy. Three buses were not displaying the front safety sign.

It is still happening, today, with total disregard for any advice Transport Scotland may give, for any penalties Aberdeenshire council has to give, because they have to be seen by council officers.

The whole advice & guidance given by Transport Scotland & LAs is a total farce, until laws are brought in, it will continue.

Just think, if one pupil had been knocked down today, we are back at square one & it will happen again , sadly.

Ron Beaty
Petitioner