

## **PE1223/TTT**

Petitioner Letter of 22 September 2016

Members of the committee

Almost 11 years & we are still discussing this, , yet only a few days ago I had someone contact me regarding pupils standing in a school bus, potential serious injury if the bus had to brake .

Regardless of Transport Scotland's strange stand on this matter.

I fight for equal safety rights for all pupils in Scotland, which has a postcode lottery on school bus safety.

I fight on for my Grand daughter left wheel chair bound & badly disabled, for Robyn Oldham & Alexander Milne both killed leaving the school bus.

For so many others over the last 30 years, because there are no powers to insist this happens, if LAs do not agree.

Safety needs to be implemented in a uniform way across every local authority.

Not as it is at present, a piecemeal approach, that some LAs or drivers choose as it suits them.

Is this not failing both child & parent, it's a total failure of safety; someone else's child is better protected than yours.

Also the failure of most I believe, LAs who did not reply to questions asked in surveys by Transport Scotland, why did they not reply.

It is now three years since School transport: survey of good practice was published which identifies examples of good practice in contracting, and covers use of seat belts, bus safety and standards, contract monitoring and pupil safety including supervision and use of CCTV. What lessons have been learned from that and in what specific ways has school bus safety improved apart from seat belts & the endless asking of questions & little action in these years?

Its good the seat belt legislation is being now pursued, this petition was joined to mine as the petitioner emigrated, ensuring it was kept a live document.

Sadly as regards signage, which I raised, nothing else has really improved, apart from Aberdeenshire council who lead in this, but still mistakes are made by bus ops & drivers who don't care, or don't think.

Still the larger signage is not on every school bus.

Last month I reported 3 instances to them.

I have reported to LAs from the borders to Fife, then into the Highlands

Throughout Scotland as I have toured I have seen the signs missing, wrongly displayed, left on as the bus does other work, stuck on so it can't be removed.

Signs behind tinted glass & window adverts

The safety signs meaning has become irrelevant to many drivers through its constant misuse.

Last year in Fife I pointed out to the head teacher some school buses did not display the safety sign, his response "I am not aware they have to "

Why when safety practices should be the maximum, not the minimum

Transport Scotland has had trials of various kinds, has contacted so many other depts. in various governments, asked a myriad of questions.

In all these years Transport Scotland has achieved very little.

There is a huge difference in traffic speed with in Glasgow approx 11 mph I believe, compared with the rural area at 60 mph, , which in fact covers most of Scotland.

Where signs need to be seen!

All I can see is the central Scotland bias, if it does nor work in Glasgow, it wont work else where!!

Keith Brown MSP issued a tool kit for LAs in 2010; again nothing has changed apart from proposed seat belts on dedicated school transport.

LAs paid no attention to it.

Yet all the statistics point to accidents in the main happen to & from school, leaving or waiting to board the bus.

In fact being run down!

I have spent 11 years to try to change things for the better, hardly missing a petitions meeting in that time, at my own expense.

Transport Scotland & LAs have been told safety signs can be any size, which means larger, the only LA to attempt this was Aberdeenshire, no other LA has done so. Why?

The front safety sign is usually the same size as the school class coach number, yet its function is to alert oncoming traffic. Totally ridiculous, Why?

Extra high flashing lights can be fitted, NOT ATTEMPTED or discussed

Scrolling signs can be fitted, NOT ATTEMPTED , not discussed ,all this has been agreed through DFT in Westminster, yet Transport Scotland has never investigated how these matter can be implemented & continue drag their heels.

Reading their response, its all about money & what they cant do, not what they can do.

This needs a solution, the truth is until something changes, pupils are at risk, luckily these last few years have been death free, however not injury free, it only takes one accident to destroy every statistic Transport Scotland produce.

No school pupil should be less safe than another, simply because of a post code.

After almost 11 years, can we not simply ensure LAs & bus companies do something, is it so hard to remove the sign, make it larger, make the school bus more visible.

One serious accident, one death will come back to haunt the parliament & Transport Scotland.

**It will also destroy another family, if your children or grand children use school transport; it could sadly be your door the police knock on.**

Transport Scotland state "You will be aware that legislative competence over the minimum standards for such signage remains reserved to Westminster and the UK Government has made clear that it is not minded to bring forward further statutory measures"

How hard have they fought? seat belt legislation was allowed to change, the difference is what ?

They also state this "Transport Scotland continues to take comprehensive measures to help keep pupils safe on the journey to school, such as our funding support to Sustrans for the Safer Routes to Schools programme, to help schools work with parents and the community to help reduce risks and encourage children to walk or cycle to school etc etc.

None of this applies to most rural areas where a minimum distance of up to 10 miles is the distance required to reach school, this in fact simply shows a bias against rural pupils, written by someone with a central Scotland outlook

This will really work in the winter, in places where there are no pavements, they can make it as comprehensive as they want, you cannot expect pupils to cycle 10 plus miles to school

Once again, I can do nothing else bit leave this with you as our government

The only two photos will show you what a mess school bus safety is, one sign so low no one can see it, another hidden between tinted glass & adverts.

