

Mayor's Response - Hit and Run: The Escalating Crisis On London Roads

MGLA040624-5094

Key information

Publication type: General

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1. Response from London Mayor Sadiq Khan

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for sharing your report, Hit and Run: The Escalating Crisis on London's Roads. I am sorry for the delay in responding.

Failing to stop at the scene of a collision is illegal, and I join you in condemning such behaviour. Collisions where someone fails to stop add to the suffering of the victims and their loved ones, as do the associated delays in getting them the support they need and justice because of the nature of these crimes. The police are focused on pursuing drivers/riders involved in fatal or serious injury collisions and trying to minimise the trauma and impact for victims.

I would like to reassure you that the Roads Transport Policing Command (RTPC) and other teams in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) are undertaking significant and wide-ranging activity to understand and tackle why people leave the scene of a collision, including work on uninsured and/or unlicensed drivers, those under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, speeding, and driving in a dangerous or careless way.

As set out in my Vision Zero Action Plan, the work of Transport for London (TfL), the police, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), and other enforcement agencies is vital to combating the kind of illegal, careless, and dangerous road user behaviour that creates risk on our roads.

The MPS and TfL take road safety very seriously and are targeting London's most dangerous drivers as part of my Vision Zero approach to reducing road danger. The MPS is currently on target to be able to take action on a million speeding offences by 2024/25 to provide a more effective deterrent to speeding. This will be delivered through a combination of on-street police enforcement, the extensive safety camera network, and mobile safety cameras introduced last year.

London has made huge strides towards reaching Vision Zero, with deaths and serious injuries falling faster than the national average. In 2023, there were 3,709 people killed or seriously injured on London's roads, the lowest level on record outside of the years affected by the pandemic.

It is also worth noting just some of the significant work undertaken in recent years, as part of our Vision Zero approach, to make our roads safer:

- 264km of our roads now have a 20mph speed limit, achieving our Vision Zero Action Plan target of 220km by May 2024.
- Indicative TfL monitoring of the 20mph speed limits introduced on roads within the central London Congestion Charging Zone shows that the number of collisions resulting in death or serious injury have reduced by 25 per cent on these roads (against a background trend of a 10 per cent reduction during the pandemic).
- TfL's Bus Safety Strategy was recently updated, setting out priorities for the network and mandating the latest safety technologies on new buses. Additionally, TfL has more than quadrupled the size of the Cycleway network since 2016 to reach over 390km in June 2024, improved 45 dangerous junctions, and supported the delivery of around 100 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.
- Supporting those impacted by collisions is also crucial. A new victim support service pilot jointly commissioned by TfL, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), police services, Brake, and RoadPeace was launched last year. This will significantly improve support for victims affected by the most serious road traffic collisions in London and those experiencing catastrophic injury or bereavement. TfL continues to evaluate how the service is working, which will inform the future approach beyond the trial.

However, I do recognise the concerns you have raised and agree there is more to do to ensure we meet the Vision Zero ambition, including on failed to stop collisions. The effect on the victims, families, friends, and communities impacted by these deaths and life-changing injuries is immense and emphasises the need for further focus.

A response to the specific recommendations in your report is provided in the annex to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London

Annex

Mayor of London's response to the recommendations of Assembly Member Caroline Russell's report Hit and Run: The Escalating Crisis on London's Roads

Recommendation 1: The Mayor should introduce a hit and run action plan and set a target to reduce hit and run collisions as part of his Vision Zero strategy.

The Mayor has been very clear since the publication of his Vision Zero Action Plan in 2018 that the target both TfL and the MPS are working towards is the elimination of all deaths and serious injuries from London's streets

by 2041.

Tackling failed to stop collisions is a key area of focus for the RTPC. The RTPC focuses its action on several priority offences that are understood to be the main reasons why drivers leave the scene of the collision, which include:

- Uninsured and/or unlicensed drivers.
- Those under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Dangerous or reckless driving.

Research on failed to stop collisions, and the profile of drivers, is limited nationally and internationally because of the nature of the offence, but these are understood to be among the most common contributing factors.

The police will investigate and pursue all drivers who have left the scene of a fatal or serious injury collision that has been assigned to the MPS Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU), and every action is taken by the unit to identify the vehicle that did not stop. The SCIU investigates anything life threatening, life changing or fatal, as declared by the hospital.

Setting a specific target to reduce failed to stop collisions would not be the best way to measure this and could be misleading, as some cases where drivers have failed to stop may be lawful e.g. it was unsafe to stop at the scene or it was a collision involving a parked vehicle where attempts were made by the driver of the car that caused the collision to find the owner who then went on to report the collision either in a police station or online. However, where unlawful, TfL and the MPS continue to work together to increase enforcement and a reduction in KSIs. We believe this is the best and most impactful way of measuring outcomes and outputs.

The Mayor agrees that more can still be done to prevent collisions from occurring and to deter drivers from leaving the scene, and as part of ongoing work on Vision Zero priorities and workstreams, TfL and the MPS have committed to exploring further joint working around tackling this issue.

Amongst other things, TfL and the MPS will look to increase publicity around police action to identify drivers and the results they receive at court. They will also monitor and undertake an analysis of the penalties issued to drivers who fail to stop and push for stronger penalties if needed.

Recommendation 2: The MPS and TfL must improve both the quality of the data they capture on hit and run collisions in London, and the way that data is stored, analysed, and shared with the public in future.

As you will be aware, recent answers to Mayor's Questions (MQs) on hit and run collisions have used data from offences recorded under Section 170 of the Road Traffic Act – failure to stop at the scene of an accident. However, it is not possible to provide accurate statistics on failed to stop collisions because the data recorded includes where, despite the initial determination being that the driver failed to stop, subsequent checks have established that the driver did then go on to report either online or at a police station. This satisfies the requirements under Section 170 of the Road Traffic Act, and no further enforcement action would be taken unless a driving offence was identified. Unfortunately, it is not possible to report how many of these records would fall into this category.

The data is the best currently available but, for these reasons, does not provide an accurate record of failed to stop collisions, with the true number likely to be lower than is recorded. However, TfL and the MPS continue to look at ways to improve this and provide data in a consistent, clear format from which accurate data can be compiled.

Recommendation 3: The MPS and MOPAC should respond to written questions in the agreed time frame and to a consistent standard.

The Mayor takes the timeliness of the response to written MQs from Assembly Members very seriously. MOPAC receives a high volume of MQs, with many requiring additional information to be obtained from the MPS, which can take some time.

All outstanding MQs were responded to before the start of the 2024 pre-election period, and MOPAC will continue its efforts to respond to MQs in as timely a manner as possible.

Recommendation 4: The MPS and TfL should address all data inconsistencies and provide a validated set of data showing the number of hit and run collisions each year since 2010, recording victim mode of travel, severity of injury and mode of travel of person failing to stop, so that trends can be accurately tracked. They should also analyse changes in hit and run since 2010 and report their findings and proposed action to Londoners.

As mentioned above, it is very challenging for TfL and the MPS to gather statistics on failed to stop collisions accurately. This is because the data includes records where, despite the initial determination being that the driver failed to stop, subsequent checks have established that the driver did then go on to report either online or at a police station. This satisfies the requirements under Section 170 of the Road Traffic Act, and no further enforcement action would be taken unless a driving offence was identified. Unfortunately, it is not possible to report how many of these records would fall into this category.

However, the MPS and TfL will provide a more detailed analysis of drivers failing to stop at the scene of a collision as far as possible, appreciating the changes in recording systems and processes since 2010. Once data has been gathered, they will make this publicly available as part of the Vision Zero enforcement dashboard, with clear explanations about how it should be interpreted.

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