

CRASH INVESTIGATION FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT Q & A

Q: What is being proposed and what will change?

A: Government has grant-funded the RAC Foundation £480K to develop new approaches to analysing data about the causes of road crashes, looking across agencies to improve our understanding of the circumstances that result in death and injury. This will provide valuable learning to inform both the future shape of national crash investigation and the future direction of road safety policy.

Q: Do you mean to say the Government isn't already investigating road crashes?

A: The police do an excellent job of investigating the most serious road crashes and ensuring those responsible are held to account. The announcement today is about Government wanting to ensure that we are drawing all the lessons we can from analysing the mass of data collected in the aftermath of collisions, to identify and understand any patterns that emerge and, in turn, what avenues these might suggest for policy-making.

Q: So, is this a new Accident Investigation Branch for Roads like the ones for Maritime, Rail and Air? If not, when will this be set up?

A: No, this is not a new Accident Investigation Branch (AIB) for Roads. This project is aimed at testing whether there is value to be gained from taking a different, systematic, national approach to the analysis of road crash data, drawing on the best practice of the AIBs for Rail, Maritime and Aviation, and, if so, to explore the options for doing so henceforward.

Roads are very different to other modes – sadly the numbers involved mean that detailed investigation of every single crash on the road network would be impractical. Also, the shape of each of the existing AIBs is tailored to the relevant sector, which tends to be an established industry with a 'closed network', whereas on roads we are dealing with millions of individual drivers making tens of millions of trips daily - so simply replicating any of those existing models will not work.

Q: How will £480K be used?

A: Government has grant funded £480K to the RAC Foundation in large part to cover the cost of additional civilian staffing within a number of police forces whose job will be to collate and interrogate data, and to perform 'deep-dive' investigation of specific cases, with further analysis looking at the picture that emerges across those forces being undertaken centrally. As a result of this analysis the RAC Foundation will be seeking to draw out lessons and recommendations for road crash investigation work and for road safety policy.

Q: Why is the RAC Foundation running these pilots?

A: The RAC Foundation is a highly respected organisation in the field of transport safety, and is well-placed to manage this work.

Q: Which are the regions involved in pilots, and why those regions?

We are working with colleagues in the National Police Chiefs Council to identify an appropriate spread of forces whose areas together cover a mix of urban, rural and inter-urban roads.

Q: When will these pilots start?

Plans are currently being developed between the DfT, RAC Foundation, Highways England and the Police. The pilots will start this year.

Q: Are Highways England involved?

A: Highways England will be fully involved in this project and will continually seek to make improvements in the way they collect, collate, interrogate and learn from the incidents on their network.

Q: When will results from the pilots emerge?

A: We anticipate that initial emerging findings from these pilots will be seen next year.

Q: How will the findings from these pilots be used?

A: The findings will provide learning to Government to inform both the future shape of national crash investigation and the direction of road safety policy.

Q: What about governance? Who will sit on the programme/project boards?

A: Governance and membership of the boards for this work is currently being determined and will be agreed shortly.