

# The Leith Agency – Road Safety Scotland Project

## Engagement with children and young people about road safety (Phase 1)

Final Report (April 2024)

David Yule, Sophie Elliott and Parisa Shirazi



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Children in Scotland would like to thank pupils and staff at King's Park Secondary School in Glasgow and Marr College in Troon, without whom this work would not have been possible.

## Introduction

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The Leith Agency has been commissioned by Road Safety Scotland to refresh and review current resources for children and young people in the junior (S1-3) and senior phase (S4-6) of secondary school. The Leith Agency has engaged with education experts in Scotland to gather views on Road Safety Scotland learning resources and to inform the redesign of these resources. We will refer to these previous findings in this report where applicable.

As part of this engagement process, Children in Scotland were asked to undertake specific engagement with children and young people to support them to share their views on road safety learning in schools and the current Road Safety Scotland resources.

During Phase 1 of this project, it was agreed that Children in Scotland would undertake initial engagement with junior and senior phase pupils from two secondary schools.

## Methodology

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Children in Scotland's approach to engagement is framed around the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child with a focus on Article 12 of the convention which states children and young people have the right to have their views heard on the issues that affect their lives.

Our engagement work is informed and supported by our [Participation and Engagement Principles and Guidelines](#) to ensure we design and deliver robust and meaningful engagement with children and young people.

As part of this project, Children in Scotland staff designed interactive and engaging school-based sessions for junior and senior phase secondary school pupils. The sessions used discussion-based, creative, and interactive digital activities to gather views on the following key topics:

- Young people's understanding and experiences of road safety learning;
- Opinions on the current Road Safety Scotland resources for S1 – S6 pupils;

- Understanding the factors that help create engaging road safety resources and learning.

Children in Scotland delivered two full-day sessions. Both sessions followed the same structure and included the activities listed below.

<b>Activity 1: Journey maps</b>
Pupils were asked to draw their route from home to school using their most common form of travel e.g. walking, bus, car, and consider the different road safety issues and risks they may encounter on their route. These issues/risks were then discussed openly by all pupils and ranked from most to least important, in combination with the risk factors identified by The Leith Agency.
<b>Activity 2: Views on existing Road Safety Scotland resources</b>
Pupils were asked to work in groups to discuss their previous experiences of road safety learning and consider where they learn about road safety and what resources/tools supported this learning.  Pupils were then asked to review current Road Safety Scotland online resources and share their views with Children in Scotland staff members.
<b>Activity 3: Looking Forward</b>
Pupils were given the option to join two groups – one discussion-based and the other creative. The discussion group were asked to consider what aspects of education and learning they find the most useful and how could this be positively applied to road safety learning and resources. They were encouraged to think about how they would go about designing road safety resources for their peers.  The creative group were asked to begin creating their own road safety resources. In conversation with Children in Scotland staff, this group shared what they wanted road safety resources to communicate and their top tips for people designing road safety resources for the future.

Children in Scotland recruited children and young people through established relationships with two secondary schools in Scotland – King's Park Secondary School (Glasgow) and Marr College (Troon). We reached out to these schools to ensure that we were getting information from young people living in different settings, both urban and more remote. It was agreed that Children in Scotland staff could deliver the session to both secondary schools during the school day.

Insights were recorded by Children in Scotland staff and by children and young people's contribution to creative resources and prompts. Analysis was completed following the two sessions to identify common themes among both the junior and senior phase pupils. Our analysis provides a snapshot of children and young people's views in relation to learning resources on which The Leith Agency can progress their redesign work.

## Limitations

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Due to the short timeline in which phase 1 of the project was to be delivered, Children in Scotland staff were limited in the number of schools and pupils that were able to participate. Several schools we contacted shared that they were experiencing a busy time in the school year and that the short timeline was a barrier to their participation and otherwise they would have been interested in taking part.

The scheduling of prelim examinations in both schools who participated in the project resulted in a limited number of senior phase pupils joining one of the sessions. This resulted in senior phase pupils being underrepresented in this project. This busy period for schools also limited the ability of teaching staff to provide their views on resources.

## Participant data

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*Table 1: Project participants by year groups*

<b>Year group</b>	<b>Number of children and young people</b>
S1 – S4	26
S4 – S6	9
<b>Total number of pupils</b>	<b>35</b>

*Table 2: Project participants by local authority*

<b>Local authority</b>	<b>Number of children and young people</b>
Glasgow	17
South Ayrshire	18
<b>Total number of pupils</b>	<b>35</b>

## Review of the current resources

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### Your Call (S1, S2, S3)

#### Videos



Image 1: Pupils reviewing and discussing the Your Call videos

The participants shared a range of perspectives on the *Your Call* videos. When watching *Matt's Story*, the group recognised that the video showed a practical example of what not to do when crossing the road. Despite this, the group felt that it took too long for the video to make this point.

**“What was the moral of the story?”** (project participant)

Members of the group used the words **“uneventful”** and **“boring”** to describe this video and also shared that the video felt outdated due to the use of hashtags and clothing worn by the actors.

*Donnie's Story* was received more positively by the group than *Matt's Story*, with young people sharing that it felt more informative, and the message was clearer. The group felt that this video had key teaching points for both drivers and pedestrians which made it appealing to a wider audience. However,

the participants still felt that this video was outdated and would continue to age quickly.

### Interactive games



Image 2: pupils reviewing the interactive resources

The interactive games were generally more well-received by the young people we engaged with than the videos. The junior groups mostly had positive responses to *To the Shops* and *Hazard Hunt*, enjoying that they were both fast-paced with a competitive element. We noticed that the young people were sharing the facts they had learned whilst playing *To the Shops*, which led to some in-depth discussion between peers. Whilst the groups did enjoy the experience of playing *Hazard Hunt*, we observed that the young people were completing the game successfully by guessing the answers.

**“You can just click wherever and you’ll get it right.”** (project participant)

**“I started writing the answer but I got bored so I’m just writing whatever now.”** (project participant)

It should be noted that although the participants enjoyed *Hazard Hunt*, a large portion of the group did not actively look for hazards or remember what hazards they had found.

The group had a mixed response to *What Would You Do*, *Text Test* and *Signspotters*. Key elements of the games that the young people liked included the clear road safety message and the simplicity of the games. Although participants commented that they learned a lot while playing

*Signspotters*, they felt this level of understanding of road signs would be better suited to senior pupils who are learning to drive.

*Head Over Wheels* received a considerably more negative response from the participants. Although the game appealed to them initially, the gameplay experienced led to frustration and confusion when attempting to make their vehicle safe.

**“This doesn’t seem to work”** (project participant)

**“I don’t know what it’s meant to teach you then”** (project participant)

After reviewing this game, participants described it as **“impossible”**, **“annoying”** and **“a bit rubbish”**

### **Recommendations:**

**The group did benefit from some of the Your Call resources, but agreed that some of the resources should be either repurposed or replaced.**

- 1. Video resources should have a clearer message and follow a quicker pace to retain the attention of the audience.**
- 2. Avoid incorporating potentially short-lived trends into future video resources to reduce the risk of them aging quickly.**
- 3. Interactive games should be focused with a clear learning outcome that is appropriate to the age and stage of the audience.**
- 4. Interactive games should be tested by children and young people for their functionality.**

### **Crash Magnets (S4, S5, S6)**

#### Class activities

In pairs, the senior pupils discussed the questions provided in the class activity titled *Getting a Lift*. The majority of the group gave positive feedback on this activity, sharing that they enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the issues in depth.

When asked if they would enjoy doing an activity like this in their PSE class or in other classes across the curriculum, the participants gave mixed feedback, saying that their experience would depend on how the teacher chose to facilitate this. The group acknowledged that the instructions for the class activity were not prescriptive and gives teachers the responsibility of making the lesson engaging and the outcomes clear. This means that young people in different classrooms could experience the same activity differently, with



varying levels of engagement and support to achieve the desired outcome. As a result, some young people will benefit from this activity more than others.

## Videos

The first issue identified by many participants in our engagement with senior pupils was the accessibility of the videos. The group quickly noticed that the media player used on the website did not support subtitles. This directly impacted the young people in our group who regularly use subtitles to better understand dialogue when watching videos online. Another member of the group pointed out that people with visual impairment may like to use audio description, which was also not an option for *Crash Magnets* or *Your Call*.

After watching *Being a Safe Pedestrian*, the group shared some of their first impressions of the resource. The topic that dominated discussion was the age of the resource.

**“It was so old!”** (Project participant)

A number of participants commented on the use of animation in the background of the video. Generally, the group felt that this use of animation was distracting. Some participants also noticed inconsistencies with editing between the live actors and the animated background.

**“I kept forgetting to listen to what they were actually saying.”** (project participant)

When the group watched *Speeding is a Bad Idea*, they made similar comments, agreeing that the videos were dated, visually unappealing and did not keep their attention. Participants recognised that the purpose of this video was to share a range of alternative views that young people have about speeding. The group agreed that this was confusing and felt that some of the characters seemed to be promoting speeding. Participants did not see any value in this type of content.

The video that had the biggest reaction from this group was *Donald's Story*. Participants commented that the video did make them consider the importance of road safety and possible risks but felt that the video was upsetting to watch.

**“It doesn't need to be so depressing.”** (project participant)

One member argued that using scare-tactics to raise awareness is not always effective:

**“It was sad and I don’t want to remember it.”** (project participant)

### Interactive games

The group had a range of views about *Courting Disaster*, the interactive game in which the player guesses the sentencing of real cases of road traffic offences. Firstly, it should be emphasised that the group did enjoy some elements of the game. A few participants shared that they enjoyed getting to hear about real cases that happened in the UK, and they enjoyed getting the opportunity to make the decisions. However, the group did not like the presentation of the game, describing it as **“outdated”** (project participant).

One young person also felt that the font used in the game was difficult to read, which led to them guessing the answers to get to the end.

**“I was bored of trying to read it.”** (project participant)

### **Recommendations:**

**The group felt that Crash Magnets resources should be replaced with a varied set of improved and modernised resources.**

- 5. Teaching resources for use with senior pupils should provide opportunities for group discussion and problem solving.**
- 6. All resources should be created with accessibility in mind. Subtitles and audio description should be available on videos. Text should be presented in an easy-read font with appropriate line spacing.**
- 7. Each resource should have a clear and focused message based on facts.**

### **Findings and advice from pupils**

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The data from our sessions with pupils has been analysed and summarised under key themes set out below. Where applicable, we have highlighted where these align with or relate to the findings from the research previously

carried out by the educational expert commissioned by Leith. This section will cover the content that young people asked for in road safety education and resources and then cover the young people's recommendations for how this information can be shared with pupils in ways that work for them.

### Topics pupils would like to be included and why

Pupils from both groups identified a number of key issues that they believed were important to be included in road safety learning and resources. Following the journey map exercise, both groups were asked to rank the road safety issues/risks they identified on a scale from most to least important.

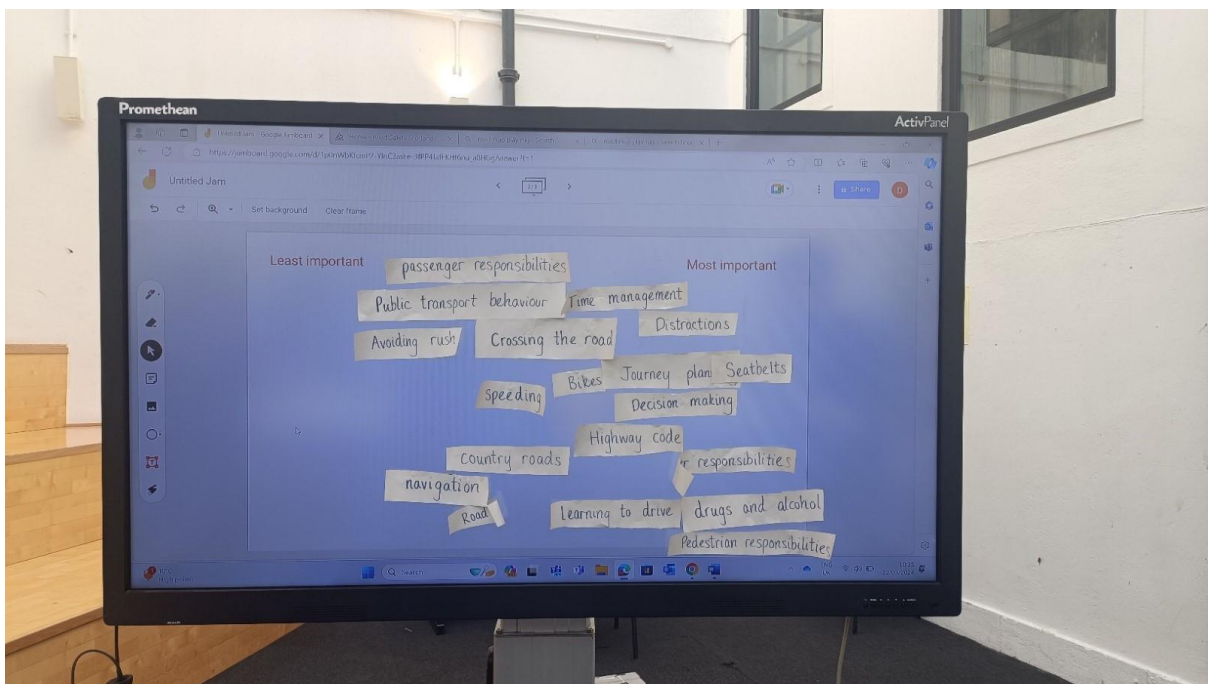


Image 3: topics ranked from most important to least important by pupils at Marr College

**Pedestrian responsibility** was considered one of the most important road safety topics by pupils in both schools. Pupils interpreted this topic as encompassing several different risks associated with road safety. Learning how to cross the road – especially in areas with a lack of pedestrian crossings - was viewed as especially important. Several pupils reported this was something they regularly encountered when moving around the community.

***“They [drivers] don’t slow down, they just zoom by, impatient drivers don’t care that they [pedestrians] are there.”*** (project participant)

Pupils at Kings Park Secondary in Glasgow highlighted issues around crossing at roundabouts and shared that this was a common requirement when

walking in the community.

Being aware of speeding drivers was viewed as a key issue by both groups, however, they acknowledged that this was not the sole responsibility of the pedestrian.

Pupils from Marr College noted that they often experienced risk from cars with limited visibility reversing out of private driveways over pavements. They said it was difficult to know when a car was going to pull out and that it often required a quick reaction to avoid an accident.

**Decision-making** was highlighted as a key issue by both school groups – this was viewed as an all-encompassing issue that impacted all other road safety issues, from being a young person who is a pedestrian and needs to cross roads safely to being a young person learning to drive.

**Driver responsibility** was considered as an important road safety issue, particularly from senior phase pupils. Most of these pupils were either learning to drive themselves or had close peers who were learning to drive. Speeding was highlighted as a key road safety issue and pupils shared that the responsibility for keeping safe around speeding cars was shared between driver and pedestrian.

Pavement parking and the difficulties for pedestrians to manoeuvre around parked cars was highlighted as a key issue by both groups. Few pupils were aware that this is now illegal and many felt they would not know what steps to take to address persistent pavement parking. There was also an acknowledgment from pupils that knowledge of the highway code for both drivers and pedestrians would be valuable for road safety.

**“I have to go on the road and stand beside a car there if I need to cross...it feels really dangerous.”** (project participant)

**Distractions** were noted as a key road safety risk from both groups of pupils. Senior phase pupils highlighted the risk of distractions from passengers. This included distracting friends who were new drivers when travelling together and being distracted when driving friends. The use of mobile phones was highlighted as a potential distraction for young people.

Junior pupils viewed risks around distractions in the context of being a pedestrian, particularly when walking with groups of friends and how this can distract young people from keeping themselves safe.

**Public transport** and behaviour on public transport was viewed as a road safety risk among King's Park Secondary pupils. Overcrowded buses were considered a risk in the event of sudden stops or crashes. Poor behaviour on public transport was viewed as a potential distraction for bus drivers, in turn increasing the risk of an accident.

Many King's Park Secondary pupils reported using public transport to travel to school, whereas no pupils who participated in the Marr College session said they used public transport to travel to school.

Pupils also told staff that information on **additional support needs** and road safety should be included in the new resources. They said that the new resources should very clearly highlight the dangers that affect people with disabilities for example, pavement parking and the need to give people sufficient space to move safely.

Resources should also aim to educate people to be aware of how additional support needs might change the way that people travel and cited examples such as awareness on public transport, road and pavement designs and how not all people will hear and be able to respond to beeping cars or ringing bicycle bells.

### **Recommendations:**

- 8. Topics included in road safety resources should aim to balance an awareness of pedestrian and driver/passenger road safety risks and responsibilities.**
- 9. Across all topics included in road safety resources there should be a focus on decision-making and supporting young people to make positive decisions.**
- 10. Designers should consider creating resources for audience groups in different built environments who will face different road safety risks e.g., public transport behaviour vs. distracting a driver.**

### **Awareness of and accessibility of the resources**

Although we are aware that working in two schools provides a small sample of road safety education being delivered, it is still interesting to note that none of the pupils we engaged with remembered being taught about road safety with Road Safety Scotland materials or recognise the Road Safety Scotland website.

When Children in Scotland staff tried to access the Road Safety Scotland website in Marr College using the school tablets, the website was blocked by

their server. We are aware from other projects we have worked on that internet controls and permissions in schools are managed by the local authority, so we would recommend that Road Safety Scotland reaches out to schools and local authorities to ensure that this barrier is removed. As suggested by the educational expert, another action that could assist teachers in using the resources would be ready-made lesson plans for teachers that they could easily adapt for their pupils.

Several pupils in the sessions stressed the importance of ensuring that the new resources are as accessible and inclusive as possible. For example, they noticed that on the senior resources there was no ability to enable closed captions which would impede the access and understanding of pupils with hearing loss. Participants told Children in Scotland staff about the importance of considering different needs when creating the new resources and making sure that they are as inclusive as possible.

One pupil spoke told staff that designers should be mindful of young people who have dyslexia and offer options of resources that have less text. They told us that they found going through some of the resources difficult, **“it was lots of reading and I just got stuck”**.

### Discussion on the use of “scare tactics”

The young people we worked with mentioned the term ‘scare tactics’ in our sessions. In both schools, it was interesting to note that there was not a consensus on whether ‘scare tactics’ are an effective tool. Some of the young people felt they were useful, and that road safety is an issue serious enough for these to be used: **“it [road safety] can really be an issue of life or death”**. Some pupils shared their experience of attending a screening of videos that demonstrated the harsh reality of accidents on the roads and the impact it can have on people’s lives. They said that this increased their awareness and consideration of road safety.

However, many of the pupils told us that balance was important. They thought that some of the resources **“took it too far”** and that designers should **“avoid harming people”**. Some participants felt that scare tactics were over-used to the point that it was no longer effective as they wanted to **“forget”** about them. Some participants also told us that they already feel nervous on the road and scare tactics make them feel more nervous.

Pupils suggested some topics that could be used as the focus of negative stories in a more sensitive way, such as being fined for texting and driving, being “told off” by a friend or someone you care about for unsafe driving

and portraying the consequences of getting into a small accident. Participants also spoke about how education resources should make efforts to try and explain what could have happened and show the different outcomes of different decisions (positive and negative).

Whilst road safety resources should promote accountability and inform young people about the associated risks of not taking road safety seriously, some of the young people called for **“a more positive outlook”**. This aligns with findings from other projects carried out by Children in Scotland which have demonstrated the impact of a rights-based approach to working with children and young people to discuss behaviour that can involve risks.<sup>1</sup>

### Ways of communicating information

The pupils we engaged with had many ideas and suggestions on formats that work for sharing information with children and young people. Some of the young people thought that games are a very effective way to share information as young people enjoy them and would be more likely to show an interest in these (**“they’re fun and people just play games nowadays”**). However, they highlighted that the games actually had to teach information as well as being fun. One young person showed staff an example of a game they like to play on their phone called ‘Traffic Cops’. This game involved scanning licence plates, spotting dangerous aspects of cars, and deciding whether to issue fines, etc. They were able to notice things like a faulty exhaust pipe on passing cars so they had learned things from the game. Another young person created their own board game about road safety during the session as this is something they would enjoy learning from. This followed a similar style to Monopoly and included cards that had road safety issues and consequences.



Image 4: pupil making their road safety themed board game

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<sup>1</sup> Children in Scotland, Alcohol marketing consultation youth engagement project, <https://childreninScotland.org.uk/alcohol-marketing-consultation-youth-engagement/>, report available at [https://childreninScotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/AME-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://childreninScotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/AME-Report_FINAL.pdf)

Others suggested that including quizzes in resources would be a helpful way of making sure that young people remembered the information learned as they are **“fun for revision”**.

Another suggestion for the designers from pupils was including relatable and practical examples where possible as would help young people understand and remember the messages contained in the resources. As one pupil said,

**“Don’t teach us about a road rage accident that happened in 1980’s New York... It has to be relatable”** (project participant)

It was clear to Children in Scotland staff that there is appetite for a range of activities and resources. This not only came across in our discussions with the pupils, but also in our observations of the sessions. Pupils were able to positively engage in different types of activities focusing on road safety including discussions, games and creative tasks. By providing choice, we were able to engage with young people in a way that worked for them.



Image 5: pupils creating their own road safety resources

### Modernising resources

**“Don’t be cringe!”** (project participant)



The young people spoke about how road safety resources can be **“cringey”**. Participants acknowledged that this made them memorable but they also said that they **“didn’t make use of them”** for this reason.

When asked how designers could avoid this, pupils said that it was a hard concept to explain but that designers should avoid **“trying too hard to make things funny”** and make sure that they run new resources past young people as a **“cringe check”**.

They also said that designers should **“make it more modern”**. They spoke about how there should be more focus on current issues for young people such as the distractions that mobile phones can cause.

This aligns with the report submitted by the education expert, which pointed out how quickly outputs could become dated.

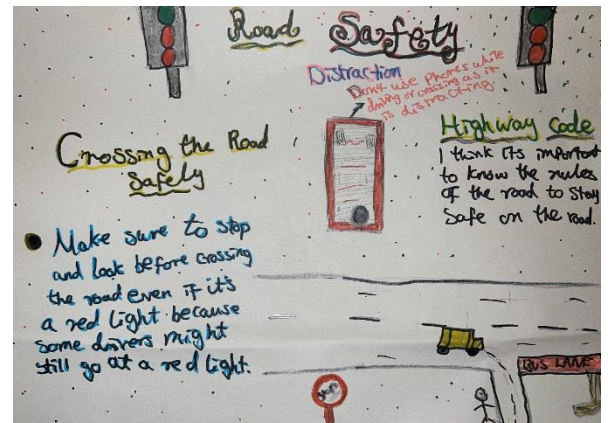
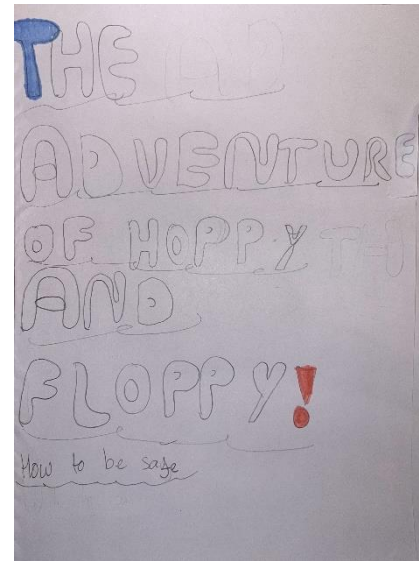
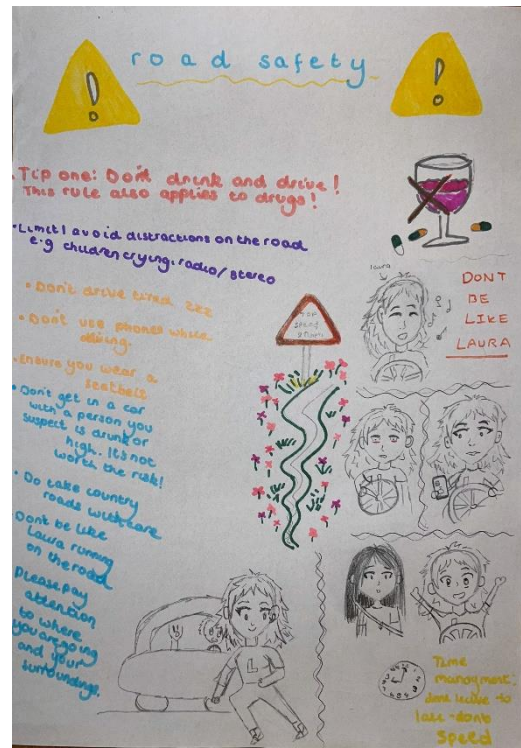
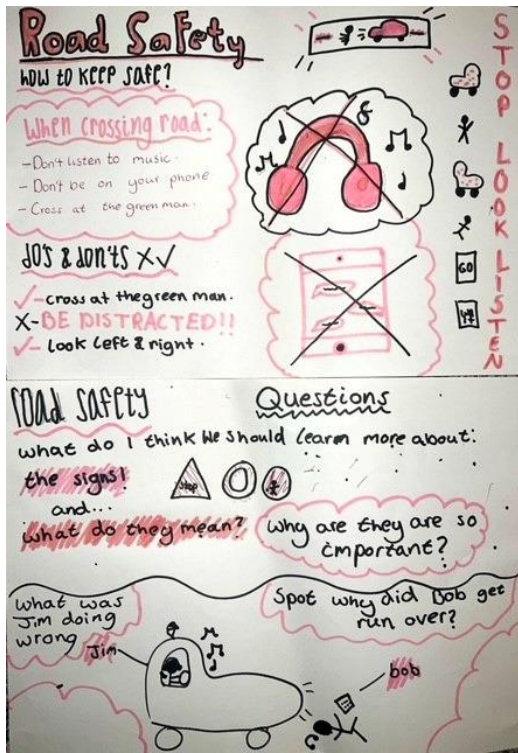
### **The importance of checking new resources with young people**

As highlighted by the educational expert previously commissioned by Leith, it is important and beneficial for resources that they are checked with young people. This ensures that they are educational, fun, and effective for their target audience.

**“People remember road safety, but they don’t care. We need to make them care”** (project participant)

### **What pupils included in their own resources**

When given the opportunity to design their own road safety resources, they came up with an impressive range of ideas. Several pupils created brightly coloured, eye-catching and informative posters with road safety advice for young people. They told staff that it was important for resources to be easy to read and not cluttered with information. They said that resources should be realistic and include the reality of risks associated with distractions and irresponsible behaviour on roads. Some of the pupils designed their own cartoon characters to convey messages to younger children and one young person planned out a video for a YouTube channel.



Images 6 - 10: road safety resources created by pupils

**Recommendations:**

- 11. Engage with local authorities and schools to ensure that they are aware of the new road safety resources available and that the Road Safety Scotland website is not blocked by schools' internet controls.**
- 12. Be mindful of different accessibility needs. Ensure that resources have options for closed captions, audio descriptions and make sure there are options with less text.**
- 13. Consider the effectiveness of 'scare tactics' and see how the same messages can be conveyed in a rights-based way.**
- 14. Create a wide range of resources so there will be something that works for different children and young people.**

**Conclusion and full list of recommendations**

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We are grateful to have had this opportunity to engage with children and young people to gather their views on the Road Safety Scotland resources for secondary school pupils. The volume and quality of data we have gathered across two sessions with pupils is a reminder of the importance and value of gathering the views of children and young people on the issues that affect them and seeing how vital information can be communicated in ways they find both educational and engaging.

We are delighted to be continuing this work with The Leith Agency and working with more pupils from different education settings.

**Full list of recommendations:**

- 1. Video resources should have a clearer message and follow a quicker pace to retain the attention of the audience.**
- 2. Avoid incorporating potentially short-lived trends into future video resources to reduce the risk of them aging quickly.**
- 3. Interactive games should be focused with a clear learning outcome that is appropriate to the age and stage of the audience.**
- 4. Interactive games should be tested by children and young people for their functionality.**
- 5. Teaching resources for use with senior pupils should provide opportunities for group discussion and problem solving.**

6. All resources should be created with accessibility in mind. Subtitles and audio description should be available on videos. Text should be presented in an easy-read font with appropriate line spacing.
7. Each resource should have a clear and focused message based on facts.
8. Topics included in road safety resources should aim to balance an awareness of pedestrian and driver/passenger road safety risks and responsibilities.
9. Across all topics included in road safety resources there should be a focus on decision-making and supporting young people to make positive decisions.
10. Designers should consider creating resources for audience groups in different built environments who will face different road safety risks e.g., public transport behaviour vs. distracting a driver.
11. Engage with local authorities and schools to ensure that they are aware of the new road safety resources available and that the Road Safety Scotland website is not blocked by schools' internet controls.
12. Be mindful of different accessibility needs. Ensure that resources have options for closed captions, audio descriptions and make sure there are options with less text.
13. Consider the effectiveness of 'scare tactics' and see how the same messages can be conveyed in a rights-based way.
14. Create a wide range of resources so there will be something that works for different children and young people.