



Press Release

30 July 2010

Driver Awareness Workshops launched

West Mercia Probation and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service have joined forces to launch a series of Driver Awareness Workshops to help educate those convicted of driving offences and make our roads safer.

The first of these workshops will be held on 3 August at Kidderminster Fire Station and is open to individuals who have been convicted of a driving offence.

The aim of the day is to reduce the number of collisions on our roads each year by educating these drivers about the dangers of drink/drug driving, speeding, distraction and tiredness, as well as the importance of wearing seatbelts.

The workshop will be hard hitting and impactful, and will include real people talking about their real life experiences to help bring home to offenders the devastation dangerous driving can cause to people's lives.

The workshop will also include videos, practical demonstrations and presentations by probation and Fire Service Officers who look at the impact on families and the consequences they have to deal with.

Julie and Simon Prior, whose daughter, Rosie, was seriously injured in a road traffic collision, give an emotional account of the aftermath of the incident at the workshop. They hope that sharing their experience will enable others to learn from it.

Helen Parker, Employment, Education and Training Manager for West Mercia Probation Trust, helped set up the workshop and also takes part in it talking about her own experience. Her family, too, have been victims of dangerous driving when her daughter, Lauren, aged 19, was the passenger in a car being driven dangerously and tragically lost her life.

Helen said: "I support these workshops wholeheartedly. As a mother I will do everything I can to stop another family feeling the constant torment we are feeling since Lauren's death. Feedback from the pilot shows the workshop really does hit home and makes the offenders understand the risks and realise the consequences of their actions, so this is a step in the right direction."

Oli, who is currently serving a prison sentence for causing death by dangerous driving, will also be at the workshop, talking to the offenders about how it has destroyed his and his family's lives.

The Driver Awareness Workshop in Kidderminster follows a successful pilot scheme in Redditch and is set to be rolled out across Herefordshire and Worcestershire following the launch.

PC Ian White, Crime Risk Manager for West Mercia Police, said: "Since the beginning of last year (2009) 100 people died and 611 have been seriously injured as a result of road collisions in West Mercia. Tragically, many of these collisions were completely avoidable but they have had lasting and far-reaching consequences for all concerned. Even one death or injury on the roads is too many and we welcome any initiative that helps educate offending drivers to act more responsibly."

Adrian Taylor, Watch Manager at Herefordshire & Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service, said: "While those convicted of dangerous driving may face a fine or a prison sentence, it's been identified that they do not routinely receive education on the consequences of their actions and this is something we are seeking to redress. We hope these workshops will make this group of offenders appreciate what a

devastating impact dangerous driving can have and will make a real difference to their future behaviour behind the wheel.”

ENDS

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Editors Notes

- The first workshop is being launched on **3 August 2010, 10.00-1.00 pm** at the Fire Station, Kidderminster.
- **You are invited to interview the following people after the launch workshop, between 1.30-3.00 pm**
Helen Parker, ETE Manager, West Mercia Probation Trust and other probation staff
Simon and Julie Prior, Parents of Rosie
Adrian Taylor, Watch Manager, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Fire and Rescue
PC Ian White, Crime Risk Manager, West Mercia Police

Please contact Jackie Bell in the first instance to arrange. Contact details as above.

- It may also be possible to speak to some of the offenders taking part in the workshop to find out what sort of impact it has had on them. This workshop has previously been successfully piloted in Redditch and feedback from the pilot workshop is available on request.
- Offenders are referred to this workshop by probation as part of their community sentence.