



## The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Trailer and Towing Safety

### Inaugural Meeting

Tuesday 30 April, 2019

12 noon – 2 pm.

Room A, 1 Parliament Street. London W1A 2AA

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#### Present

**Members:** Karin Smyth MP, Sir David Amess MP, Alan Brown MP, Sharon Hodgson MP, Karen Lee MP

**Secretariat:** Alicia Dunne (Deputy Director General, NCC (National Caravan Council)), Duncan Kenyon (Policy and Public Affairs Executive, NCC).

**Invited:** Alistair Burt MP, Thangam Debbonaire MP, Tim Booth (NaVCIS), Dr. Joanne Edwards (AECOM), Ian Hewlett (Camping and Caravan Club), Will Hingley (The Office of Karin Smyth MP), Donna Hussey (Parent of Freddie Hussey), Scott Hussey (Parent of Freddie Hussey), Jane Gurney (Tilly's Trailers), John Lally, (Director General, NCC;) Stuart Lovatt (Highways England), Amanda Lowe (Highways England), Simon McGrath (Camping and Caravanning Club), Jonathan Moore (SMMT), Frank Norbury (PACTS), Antony Ovens (Department for Transport), Des Payne (British Horse Society), Ray Pinder (NTTA), Thomas Price (National Farmers Union), Joe Salter (Office of Karin Smyth), Michael Sedgwick (Department for Transport), Katharine Slocombe (The Office of Karin Smyth MP), Sarah Smithurst, MBE (NTTA), Martin Spencer (Caravan and Motorhome Club), Robert Webb (DVSA), Sarah Wigmore (Approved Workshop Scheme).

#### Apologies

Joshua Harris (Brake), Alan Norton (Into Independence Ltd).

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Karin Smyth MP welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. She emphasised the importance of trailer safety, which was brought to her attention by her two constituents, Donna and Scott Hussey in tragic circumstances following the death of their young son, Freddie. Karin described the formation of the Group as a “flag in the ground” moment with an objective to bring awareness to Westminster and to drive meaningful change on all matters related to trailer and towing safety.

The group was born out of two earlier trailer safety summits and the inclusion of a section in the Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Act (Section 20) to require Department for Transport



(DfT) to carry out research and deliver a report on trailer safety.

The officers are drawn from across parliamentary parties reflecting cross-party issues. Karin hopes the Group will become a centre of expertise and guidance. She thanked all those present from across the trailer and towing community for their support.

## 2. APPG on Trailer and Towing Safety formal commencement

- a) Name of the Group - Karin Smyth MP confirmed that the name of the APPG would be the 'All-Party Parliamentary Group on Trailer and Towing Safety'
- b) Statement of Purpose – “The APPG on Trailer and Towing Safety was established and registered in 2019 to bring together Parliamentarians, trailer and towing industry representatives and consumer groups to discuss and raise awareness of trailer and towing safety in the UK”
- c) Members of the Group - Alicia Dunne, representing the Secretariat to the Group, explained that the membership of the Group would be drawn from all those present and invited to attend. Under Data Protection legislation it would be necessary to obtain consent from each member by completing a form which would be recorded by the Secretariat. A form of consent is to be circulated to all and acceptances listed on the APPG website in accordance with APPG rules and procedures.
- d) Election of officers - Karin Smyth MP was proposed by Sir David Amess MP as Chair which was agreed unanimously. Karen Lee MP was proposed by Sir David Amess as Vice-Chair which was agreed unanimously. Alan Brown MP, Sharon Hodgson MP and Sir David Amess MP were all elected unanimously.
- e) Secretariat - The National Caravan Council (NCC) was appointed Secretariat.
- f) APPG website – a dedicated website has been created for the group and can be accessed at [www.trailerappg.org.uk](http://www.trailerappg.org.uk) together with a twitter feed - @trailerAPPG
- g) Public enquiry point – all enquiries to the group can be made through [trailerappg@thencc.org.uk](mailto:trailerappg@thencc.org.uk)
- h) Registration of the Group - Registration will take place in accordance with the rules of APPGs within 28 days of the inaugural meeting on 30 April 2019.
- i) Work programme - the work programme will be developed as the Group grows, the trailer safety report is delivered to Parliament due on 19 July 2019 and issues are discussed. The next meeting will consider the work plan in more detail.

## 3. Legislative developments on Trailer Safety: Data, Licensing and Registration

a) The Chair, Karin Smyth MP, invited the representatives from the DfT to present to the group the Government's plans for the trailer safety report that was commissioned to satisfy the requirements under Section 20 of the Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Act 2018.

b) Dr Joanne Edwards from AECOM gave a presentation on the research carried out and the analysis for the report. She identified gaps in the data but commented that the analysis presented reflected the current position and that in time this could change. The focus of the report was on analysis on existing data, and on new roadside data collected by DVSA on O2 trailers between December 2018 and February 2019, looking at issues relating to roadworthiness and compliance. It had reviewed other legislative requirements across Europe and beyond to



establish whether mandatory registration of such trailers had impacted on road safety.

Dr Edwards reported that the research team had encountered difficulties collecting data on incidents involving trailers because of limitations of the current STATS19 forms, leading to gaps in the research.

The report would consider a number of options. In response to the findings, Michael Sedgewick and Anthony Ovens from the DfT outlined the scope and overview of the initial findings and explained the report will examine three key points; i) trailers under 3500kg ii) safety assessments and iii) an examination of mandatory testing. However, the Minister had directed them not to narrow their report to just these points.

The issues of note were limited due to the confidential nature of the report, and the analysis of the DVSA roadside checks were also limited but useful. Although they were not able to discuss the conclusions of the report at this stage the DfT reported that they were looking at behaviour, testing, connection of the trailer and the condition of the trailer and the importance of collaborative working in what appears to be a fragmented approach to safety across the various trailer and towing stakeholders. The DfT noted they had an action to bring this together and were keen to work with the APPG on this issue.

DfT is aware that the data collected so far has been limited owing to time restraints in order to comply with the requirement to publish the report within 12 months of the Bill becoming an Act, which gave them less than a year to collect the data. For example, it was clear that caravans as a trailer sector are underrepresented in their samples, and the timeframe so far has not been long enough to create the analysis needed to come to a full conclusion and further work is required.

DfT are looking further at an EC Directive 2014/45 which suggests testing be introduced for all O1 and O2 trailers across Europe, albeit that they have concerns with the findings. DfT confirmed that the next steps are to meet the statutory deadline to deliver the report to Parliament by 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

In response Karin Smyth MP stated that she was grateful to the DfT for the initial insight into the report ahead of the statutory deadline. The next meeting of the APPG will discuss the findings of the report in more detail.

Tim Booth (NaVCIS) posed a question asking if the 84% compliance rate of O3 and O4 vehicles tested (as quoted by AECOM) was based solely on GB registered trailers, or if this included international operators. The DfT did not have that information to hand, following the meeting this figure was confirmed to include both domestic and foreign registered vehicles.

A copy of the presentation will be made available to view and download from the APPG website at [www.trailerappg.org.uk](http://www.trailerappg.org.uk)

#### **4. Launch of the National Towing Working Group Towing Framework**

Amanda Lowe and Stuart Lovatt from Highways England launched the National Towing Working Group Towing Safety Framework on behalf of the National Towing Working Group (NTWG), stating



that the group was a collaboration between all stakeholders with a specific interest in trailer and towing safety. The objective of the Framework is to improve awareness amongst the towing community, to increase compliance with current legislation and to create consistent messaging for all commercial and non-commercial vehicles involved with towing. It will also focus on campaigning for greater awareness and education of towing safety issues. The Group is focused on targeting business and domestic towing behaviour and stated they cannot eliminate risks, but can educate people to minimise risks, via recognition of shared responsibility.

The Group agreed that the existing STATS19 questions should be changed to understand the journey purpose when incidents are recorded. The NTWG stated that more education and awareness of safer towing for those towing for business as well as pleasure was overdue and welcomed the APPG as a source of more advice and an avenue to lobby parliamentarians.

In response Karin Smyth MP welcomed the launch of the Framework stating that the work of the group had helped highlight the importance of raising awareness across the towing community and pledged support from the APPG to help the Group in achieving these objectives.

A copy of the NTWG slide presentation is available to download from the APPG website.

## **5. Other business**

### a) DVSA – work in relation to trailer safety

Robert Webb from DVSA gave an overview of the work of the DVSA in this area and the social media campaign on trailer safety which had focused on the tragic death of Freddie Hussey #towsafe4freddie. He told the APPG that DVSA was responsible for licensing, education and enforcement services and that their vision was for safer journeys for drivers. The trailer safety campaign is social media led, predominantly on Twitter. Their current tow safe campaign began over Easter 2019 which had recorded a positive, solid start.

The 'Call to Action' going forward was to look for more engaging content from contributors and to amplify their messages with stakeholders working with local authorities and a range of people to help improve general awareness of safer towing. Those present were invited to contribute content and ideas.

A copy of the DVSA presentation is available to view and download from the website.

### b) NaVCIS and trailer safety roadside checks

Tim Booth from NaVCIS gave a very visual presentation taken from recent trailer safety checks conducted at motorway service stations across England to illustrate a wide range of unsafe and poorly loaded trailers and vehicles. The checks and observations recorded included excessive trailer lengths, the importance of relevant driving licence permissions of the driver, the condition of the trailer, the correct use of breakaway cables, and tow-bar issues. Mr Booth also challenged DfT on their public messaging and content of some of the information contained in their towing guide. He concluded that safety information was currently too fragmented in part because of the wide range and types of trailer. It was hoped that the NTWG and this APPG would play a role in helping to resolve this.

A copy of the presentation can be downloaded from the website.



### c) Approved Workshop Scheme (AWS)

Sarah Wigmore from the AWS – the caravan industry tripartite service comprising the NCC, the Caravan and Motorhome Club and the Camping and Caravanning Club - gave an overview of the history and legacy of the service. Comprising of 486 workshops (fixed and mobile) across the UK, the AWS creates a benchmark for caravan servicing in the UK, with over 1200 qualified workshop technicians in workshops nationwide working to a strict code of practice and robust terms and conditions. Under the scheme workshops are assessed annually by a team of independent, highly experienced assessors carrying out safety critical checks to ensure compliance is achieved. Mrs Wigmore confirmed that the Scheme plans to extend its work into other leisure light trailer areas and looks forward to working alongside the National Towing and Trailer Association (NTTA) on further safety and training initiatives as part of its objective to continually raise awareness of professional servicing and safety checks.

### **6. Date and Venue of next meeting**

Karin Smyth MP thanked everyone for their contributions to a highly successful inaugural meeting and for sharing their sector knowledge and experience.

It was suggested the next meeting take place in Parliament in September.

The date will be advised in due course.