

Release: Week commencing 17 July

Education day for older drivers relaunched – and more planned!

Over 40 experienced drivers took part in the newly refreshed *Safer Driving @ 60+* training course recently hosted by the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership (SYSRP). The inaugural session, held at the Lifewise Centre in Hellaby, was the first of four aimed at helping older drivers brush upon their Highway Code and driving skills, keeping them driving safer for longer.

The free session covered a wide range of road safety, including the four main causes of fatal road traffic collisions; drink and drug driving, speeding, not wearing a seatbelt and using a mobile phone while at the wheel. There was a particular focus on prescription and over the counter medicines, and the importance of checking the label to see whether the side effects can affect driving.

Among the contributors were Vision Express, Highways England, the Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind and Drink Well, Age Well, as well as segments led by SYSRP trainers. Omar Hassan, an optometrist from Vision Express, led a session on eye health and the importance of having regular sight tests, while Dave Skupski and Sarah Watson-Quirk from Highways England gave an overview of smart motorways – particularly relevant following recent upgrades to the M1 between junctions 32 and 35a.

In addition to classroom sessions, course participants were invited to browse a marketplace of stallholders on the purpose-built training set at the Lifewise Centre where they were able to pick up free resources and advice from a range of exhibitors. Course participants were also given the opportunity to sign up for free driving sessions with an approved driving instructor.

In the afternoon participants were treated to a driver extrication demonstration by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and a first aid session led by Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

Barbara, from Whiston, said: “It’s been a really good day – the sessions have been interesting and they have helped me feel more confident about using the road”. Hazel and Malcolm, from Kimberworth, also found the session beneficial: “We’ve recently come back to the UK after 30 years abroad”, said Hazel. “We have lots of driving experience, but most of that was in North America. So today has been a helpful refresher.”

Joanne Wehrle, Safer Roads Manager for SYSRP explained the purpose behind the course and why it has been relaunched: “The free *Safer Driving @ 60+* session is about helping older drivers make the most of the skills they already possess. Our data shows us that casualties in South Yorkshire have been decreasing over time, but there has been an increase in driver casualties for those aged 65 and over.

“Although this age group is less likely to be involved in a collision, their age means that the likelihood of injury increases. *Safer Driving @ 60+* aims to help older drivers brush up on their skills and knowledge and help them become more confident behind the wheel.

“We’ve had some very positive feedback, and we are already planning further *Safer Driving @ 60+* events around South Yorkshire. However drivers of any age don’t need to wait for our training sessions – they can access free road safety information and advice on the SYSRP website at www.sysrp.co.uk”

The final component of the *Safer Driving @ 60+* course, consists of two e-learning modules; one on eyesight and the other on renewing a driving licence at 70. These online tools are available for anyone to access. For further details about the e-modules and future *Safer Driving @ 60+* events visit www.sysrp.co.uk/older_drivers

ENDS

Note to Editors

The aim of the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership (SYSRP) is to reduce the number of people injured in road traffic collisions and make South Yorkshire roads safer.

The Partnership Team is available to provide advice, training, support and information on a variety of topics including safety for pedestrians, cyclists, powered two wheeled riders and drivers. If you would like some road safety advice, please visit us at www.sysrp.co.uk or email saferroads@southyorks.pnn.police.uk

SYSRP is made up of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Councils, Highways England, SYPTA, the University of Sheffield, the Yorkshire Ambulance Service, public health bodies, South Yorkshire Police (including South Yorkshire Safety Cameras), Peak District National Park Authority and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue.

Further information can be found by visiting the SYSRP website www.sysrp.co.uk, by calling 01709 832462 or by following on Twitter at @safer_roads

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