



We Need To Talk About Handsfree: Officer understanding of the dangers of handsfree and handheld mobile phone use by drivers



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This project was funded by The Road Safety Trust, in September 2022, to explore the issue of a potential displacement effect from handheld to handsfree phone use, police officer understanding of the dangers of handsfree phone use, and how this understanding impacted on their interactions with drivers observed using their mobile phone. The scope included measuring officer attitudes to phone use and their behaviour with offenders, both before and after receiving some education on the dangers of handsfree phone use.
- Police officers from across England and Wales were recruited to participate in an online survey which measured their attitude and experiences relating to mobile phone use by drivers. Having completed the survey, officers were asked to complete an [evidence-based interactive activity](#) which highlights the dangers of handsfree phone use. They were then surveyed again, to enable a comparison of attitude measures pre- and post- exposure to education. In addition to the online survey, a further group of officers completed in-person interviews with a member of the research team. Interviews followed the same approach as the survey.
- Analysis of both the quantitative survey data and the qualitative interview data allowed the team to identify key differences in attitude following exposure to education. Key themes in the data revealed that prior to education many officers considered that the main issue with phone use is the manual and visual distraction it imposes, and that handsfree phone use is a safe alternative to illegal phone use. Data also revealed that officers felt discretion is needed when considering prosecution due to feelings of fairness, the type of phone use witnessed and future potential police-public interactions. Finally, data indicated that officers were in support of greater education for drivers regarding phone use (both at the roadside and elsewhere), but that officers themselves largely felt they did not need such further education themselves.
- Quantitative data showed strong support from officers in enforcing mobile phone law with a view to improving road safety. However, many officers reported that they routinely offer roadside education to offenders, including a recommendation to use handsfree in future, based on the view that handsfree phone use is safer than handheld use.
- After exposure to the interactive education, which provides personalised feedback on the user's own multitasking ability, attitudes relating to the safety of handsfree phone use changed significantly. Officers changed their views on the seriousness/danger of handsfree phone use, and phone use while stationary in traffic. They further reported the intention to use their education in practice, including explaining the dangers of *all* phone use to offenders in future, recommending avoiding handsfree use and explaining specifically why handsfree phone use is dangerous. Some officers further suggested they would change their own phone use both at work and outside of work following experiencing the education, while others considered their own expertise and capability made such changes unnecessary.
- In light of the effectiveness of education in changing officer attitudes and potential future practice, we provide a set of recommendations for wider application of education and specific guidance on officer-offender interactions. This includes a directive to not promote handsfree use as a safe alternative to illegal phone use, to target follow up education to address issues of consistency in applying the law (given views on discretion and context) and to provide police-specific education on the dangers of their own phone use.

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1.0 Introduction and project brief

Phone-use by drivers remains a significant road safety issue, with increasing numbers admitting to the behaviour (RAC, 2022). While handheld phone-use is illegal, handsfree phone-use is not, despite a wealth of research evidence demonstrating the equal distraction it imposes (Wells et al, 2021). The cognitive distraction imposed by phone-use can explain increased crash risk, reduced hazard detection, and poor situational awareness (Briggs et al 2016/2018, Caird et al, 2018). The government has acknowledged the dangers of handsfree yet is reluctant to change legislation due to the challenges posed for enforcement¹ (Wells et al, 2021). It therefore remains the legal, though equally dangerous, ‘alternative’ to handheld phone use.

There are alternative pieces of legislation that may be used in respect to handsfree mobile phone using drivers, although they do not merely prohibit using a hands-free phone. For example, Section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 outlines offences of careless driving, otherwise referred to as ‘due care and attention’, and inconsiderate driving, which are committed when driving a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road or other public place without due care and attention, or reasonable considerations of others. But legislation of this type relies on driving being impaired, and observed, so does not offer any potential for deterrence of drivers who, generally speaking, will not believe that their behaviour *will* be impaired (ibid).

Without bespoke legislation targeting handsfree phone use, alternative approaches are needed to reduce these legal forms of distraction. In the absence of widespread opportunities for driver diversion (see Savigar-Shaw and Wells, forthcoming), police officers should be viewed as at the frontline in terms of their interactions with phone-using drivers. Every roadside ‘stop’ of a handheld phone using driver is an opportunity to impart information about the relative dangers of different behaviours. Methods such as AI cameras and ‘dash cam’ reporting of offences do not contain any such opportunity for education at the time an offence is committed.

This project was aimed at better understanding the role of police officers in reducing distraction caused by phone use. Research shows that the knowledge and awareness of officers regarding the dangers of handsfree mobile phone-use is inconsistent and that some officers advise drivers that they engage with because of handheld phone use to change to handsfree use - something that, whilst bringing them back within the law, does nothing to improve their safety (Savigar, 2019; Savigar-Shaw et al, 2022). As there are no longer educational courses offered to detected phone-using drivers, this roadside interaction is an important opportunity for officers to promote safety over legality and avoid drivers moving to a legal yet equally distracting form of phone-use. The project therefore contributes to understanding officer attitudes to, and awareness of, the dangers of handsfree phone-use, as well as evaluating how an educational intervention might meaningfully inform their interactions with distracted drivers. Additionally, it considers how police officers understand their *own* distraction while driving, to inform future work around police driving behaviour, risks and collisions.

This project utilised both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, centring on the deployment of an existing educational interactive activity focusing on driver distraction, to determine its potential role in achieving behaviour change. The interactive activity was used with police officers to explore its potential to change officer willingness to recommend handsfree use to others, as well as its ability to change their views about their own distraction.

Aims and objectives

The project’s objectives were as follows:

- Understand drivers’ views on their likely response to having been caught using a handheld phone, to ascertain if a move to handsfree use would be likely (Objective 1).
- Understand current police officer understandings of handsfree distraction and the way it informs their practice (Objective 2).

¹ In 2019, the Transport Select Committee recommended that the Government explored options for banning handsfree mobile phone-use while driving—suggesting that a difficulty in enforcing actions should not equate to a failure to try (Transport Select Committee 2019a). The Government replied that ‘there are many difficulties associated with a potential ban on hands-free use, including enforcement which would be hugely problematic’ (Transport Select Committee 2019b: 2)

- Expose police officers to an interactive intervention designed to alter their thinking around handsfree distraction (Objective 3).
- Revisit officer understandings of handsfree distraction post-intervention and measure any changes in their attitudes (Objective 4).
- Establish if any changes in attitudes map on to intended changes in practice (Objective 5).
- Develop recommendations for the training of police officers in responding to instances of mobile phone distraction (Objective 6).

Activities

The interactive activity, entitled '[Are you a focused driver?](#)', which was used as the intervention in this project was created by academics at the Open University (see Fig. 1). This activity was identified in the [Mobile: Engaged compendium](#) (2nd edition) as having potential to overcome a significant issue with educational interventions in this area: drivers consistently overestimate their own multitasking and driving ability whilst believing that other drivers lack such ability and therefore pose a danger to others. This activity directly challenges drivers' inflated confidence by enabling them to experience *their own* distraction and decreased driving performance.

This evidenced-based, gamified interactive puts the user in the driver's seat and asks them to watch a series of short driving videos while listening to a mobile phone call in which the caller provides the user with a shopping list of items to remember. After watching the driving videos, users are asked to recall information from the phone task, and to indicate any hazards they detected in the video.

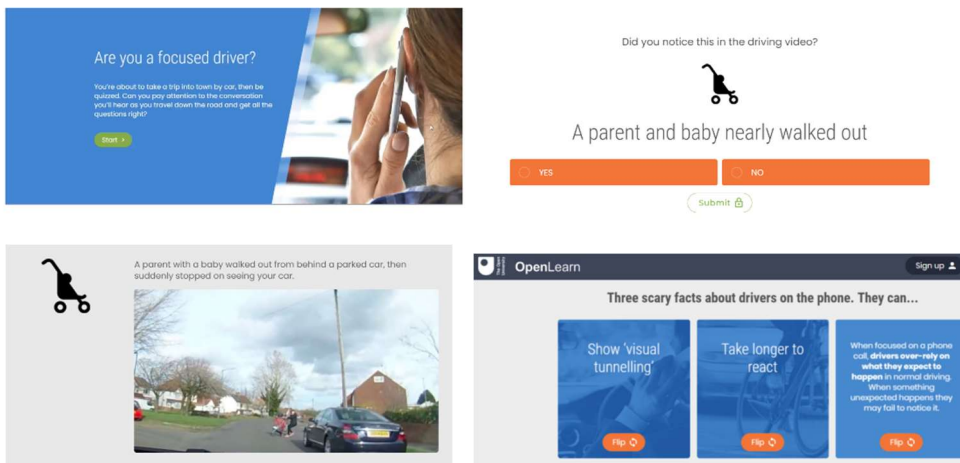


Figure 1: Screenshots from interactive activity used as the intervention

Having provided responses, users are given a score for their hazard detection ability and for their performance in the phone task. As such, users receive instant, personalised feedback on their performance. They are then shown the video again, with all hazards highlighted, and a list of the hazards they failed to notice. Users are then directed to further information which explains the research findings behind the interactive (e.g. explanation of cognitive distraction and why handsfree phone use is problematic), and covers frequently asked questions relating to phone use by drivers.

2.0 Methodology

Design and procedure

The project used a survey and interview-based approach. For objective 1 (ascertaining public views on what they would do in future if they were caught using a handheld phone) a survey was conducted on members of the public. For objectives 2-5 (understanding and potentially changing police attitudes to phone use), a survey was conducted on police officers, with a further group of police officers completing in-depth interviews.

Public survey (objective 1)

The survey was conducted online and was carried out by YouGov. It comprised two questions relating to driver phone use and intentions after having been detected using a phone handheld while driving. The first question asked respondents to record the ways in which they use their phone while driving, with a list of possible options to select from (see appendix 1 for full list). The second question asked respondents to record what they would do in future if they were caught by the police using their handheld phone. Again, a list of possible responses were provided, including a 'don't know' and open response option.

Officer survey (objectives 2-5)

A 32-question online survey was used to assess police officer attitudes, knowledge and awareness of the dangers of handsfree phone-use. The survey was built and hosted using survey software, Qualtrics. This survey included questions relating to interactions with offenders that they encounter, as well as their own views about driving as a police officer (objective 2). The survey was shared via RPAN², NRPOII³ and other existing contacts, including two partner police forces.

After completing the first part of the online survey, respondents were directed to complete the interactive educational activity. This took between 5-10 minutes to complete and was delivered wholly online in a self-paced way (objective 3). Having completed the interactive activity, which contained checks to ensure the task has been fully completed, officers were immediately surveyed again. The second part of the online survey took measures of attitude, knowledge and awareness of the dangers of handsfree phone-use, allowing for a comparison between pre- and post- intervention responses. (Objectives 4 and 5)

In addition to the survey, 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with officers in our partner police forces (these were different participants to the survey strand of the project). The interviews followed a similar approach to the survey outlined above (i.e., an initial interview to discuss attitudes/knowledge, followed by completion of the interactive activity, and then a second interview to ascertain any changes based on engagement with the intervention), but were carried out in-person and allowed for more detailed discussion of key issues identified.

Full ethical approval was gained from the Open University (for the survey aspects of the research) and Staffordshire University (for the interview aspect of the research).

Participants

Public survey:

1550 participants (50% male, 50% female), all of whom were aged 18 years or over and held a UK driving licence, were recruited via a YouGov poll to participate in the public survey. This sample was representative of age (meaning equal proportions of different age categories aged 18-55+ years were surveyed), gender, socio-economic status and geographical region. As these data were collected to measure a snapshot of representative driver attitudes to phone use, data relating to driving experience, annual mileage and type of vehicle were not collected. Participants completed the survey online.

Police survey and interviewees:

411 participants from 28 different police forces from across England and Wales were recruited to participate. 81% were male, 16% female and 3% did not specify. They ranged in age from 20-64yrs (mean age of 39.42 years, S.D = 8.78 years). 89% of participants were White, 1.4% were Asian and 1.7% were of mixed/multiple ethnicities. 6.6% did not provide their ethnicity. Officers had an average of 14 years work experience (S.D = 7.91 years, range 1-34 years) and 64% of participants worked in a dedicated Roads Policing Unit (RPU). 72% were trained to advanced standard police driving, 18% were trained to response level and 10% were trained to standard level. 75.4% of respondents were ranked

² RPAN - The Roads Policing Academic Network, has over 230 members who are either academics, policy makers or frontline practitioners with an interest in roads policing. Members receive a weekly email with queries, opportunities, events, etc. on a roads policing theme, which included a link to the survey.

³ NRPOII - National Roads Policing Operations, Intelligence and Investigations is part of the NPCC Roads Policing portfolio. Members are either operational police officers, police leads or police partners across the public sector.

as Constable, 17.5% as Sergeant, 3.3% as Inspector, 2.3% as Special and fewer than 1% were ranked as Chief Inspector or Superintendent.

3.0 Results

Public survey findings

The first question posed in the public survey was a measure of self-reported phone use by a representative sample of UK drivers. Results revealed that 54% (N=837) of respondents claimed not to use their phones at all while driving. A further 35% (N=542) said they made handsfree calls, while 17% (N=264) admitted to various forms of handheld phone use (see Fig. 2).

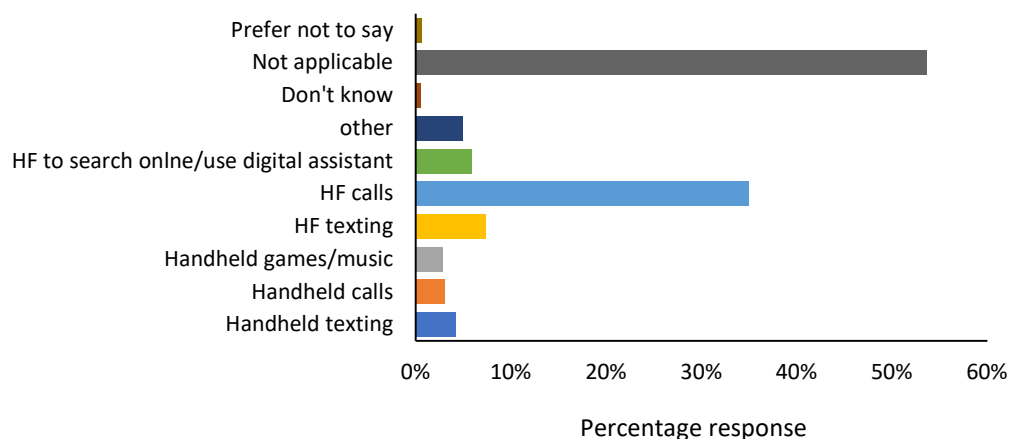


Figure 2: Self-reported phone use as measured by YouGov poll, in response to the question: which, if any, of the following ways do you use your phone while driving?

These findings are in line with other self-report measures (e.g. RAC, 2022) of phone use by drivers, and demonstrate that a significant proportion of phone using drivers engage in handsfree use. The second question in the survey was posed to those participants who claimed to use their phones handheld (N=264). Participants were asked to imagine they have been caught and sanctioned for using their handheld phone by a police officer. They were asked how, if at all, they would change their mobile phone use in the future. Results revealed that while 31% (N=82) of respondents said they would stop any type of phone use, 33% (N=87) said they would switch to legal, handsfree use. As can be seen in Figure 3, others claimed they would continue with handheld use, perhaps while also attempting to hide or limit their phone use, indicating adaptation rather than cessation (Wells, 2015).

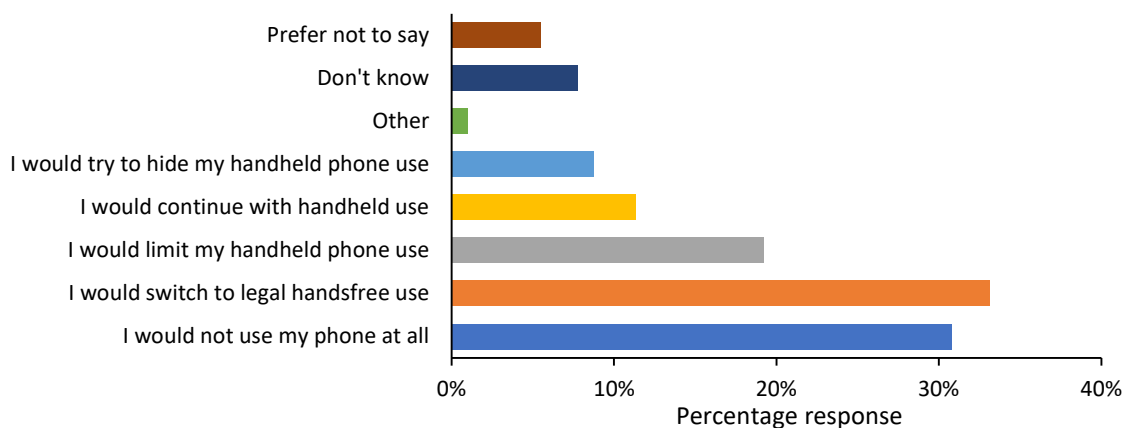


Figure 3: Responses to YouGov poll regarding future intentions for phone use in response to the question: if you were caught by the police using your phone while holding it, which, if any, of the following would you choose to do in the future?

Taken together, these findings suggest that there is a considerable amount of phone use by drivers in both its legal and illegal forms. Moreover, enforcement of handheld law which results in prosecution would not necessarily deter phone use in the future and could further displace drivers from an illegal form of the behaviour (handheld) to a legal, yet equally dangerous form (handsfree use). These findings provide evidence of support for the need to understand officer interactions with mobile phone offenders, with a view to identifying if these interactions could be more productive in promoting safety rather than just legality.

Police Officer views about phone use and enforcement

The quantitative data collected via the police officer survey were statistically analysed to identify any changes in attitude pre- and post- exposure to the interactive. The qualitative data collected by the interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis approach whereby each of the interview transcripts were coded and themed individually by one of the research team, before being brought together as a whole dataset for the whole research team to revise and contribute sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We discuss the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analyses alongside each other as we address each of the project's objectives.

Turning to the officer survey, it is important to explore what officers believe about use of phones while driving, to understand whether they are likely to be engaging in the kinds of encounters with road users that we wish to influence. Findings (summarised in Fig. 4) showed strong support amongst officers for enforcement of mobile phone law, suggesting a clear willingness to stop and prosecute offending drivers (indeed a high proportion of officers agreed that they regularly encounter phone offenders).



Figure 4: Summary of percentage agreement from officers on enforcement and importance of mobile phone law

This suggests that what officers say in their encounters with drivers is a relevant topic of inquiry. As officers largely agreed that current

law improves road safety, and that illegal phone use is dangerous, it makes sense that officers, motivated by safety, would use the law in their interactions with offenders to reduce the likelihood of drivers engaging in the behaviour again in future. This links to the first qualitative theme identified: **a focus on handheld use**.

However, it was also clear from the officer survey that whilst use of the law against illegal behaviour was endorsed, officers felt that it was up to them to decide what actually constituted law breaking and hence to decide what the appropriate response was. This understanding helps to reconcile the apparently contradictory data showing that 71% (N=292) of officers think phone use should always be prosecuted, with the data shown in Figure 5, below, which suggests many officers use their own judgment and discretion when encountering offenders.

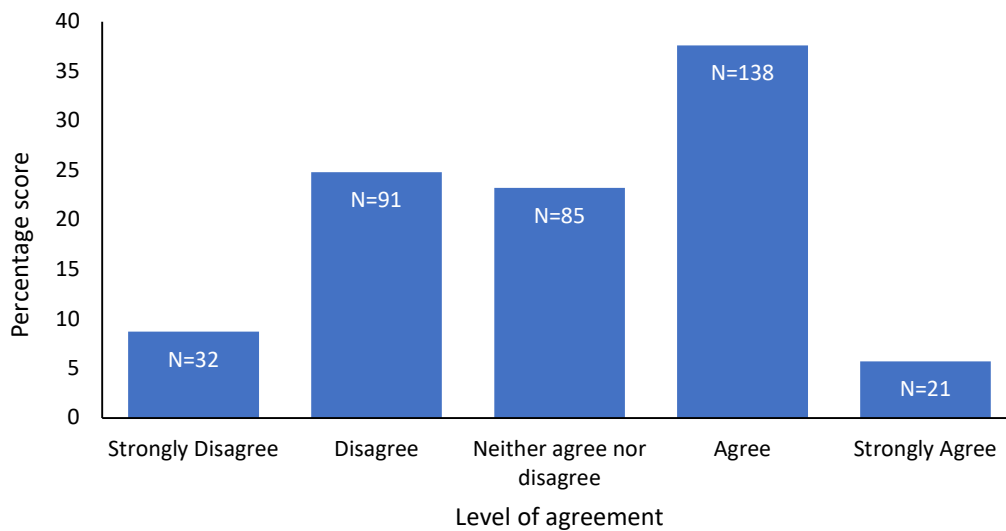


Figure 5: Officer responses to the statement: before using a mobile phone charge, I think carefully about the specific situation and the level of possible danger involved

As such, whilst handheld use is considered to be dangerous, and legitimately against the law, not all handheld use will attract officer attention or prosecution. This is because officers report valuing their discretion - the ability to decide for themselves whether or not an observed action constitutes an enforceable moment. This ties in with responses to other survey items showing that 21% (N=77) of officers say that they sometimes use another charging option when they think a driver's mobile phone offence was not serious enough to warrant 6 points and a £200 fine, and 23.4% (N=86) of officers agreeing (and a further 20%, N=73, of officers saying they were unsure) that mobile phone use while stationary in traffic does not pose a serious safety concern. Various different variables were reported to be taken into account in deciding if drivers were stopped or not and whether they were given words of advice, or prosecuted, contributing to the second qualitative theme of **considerations for prosecution**:

"A lot of the time it depends what environment you're in. So, like if they're outside of school, it's kicking out time or something like that. Well, to me, sorry, you know it's an offence not to use a mobile phone. Especially when you've got an increased risk of the kids and parents, and there's a lot going on. So, in my view they're going to get a ticket all day long. They ain't gonna get educated because they're blatantly posing a danger to the people around them." (RPU officer, 20 years' experience).

"If it's blatant... if you're following somebody while we're doing the checks, and they're quite clearly on the phone, nattering away, oblivious to everything around them, it does change things. If you're driving past and you're going to another job or driving down the motorway patrol and somebody very quickly you can see clearly see it's on a holder, they'll pick it up and then put it back, it does change things." (RPU officer, 7 years' experience).

Within this theme of discretion around prosecution, further evidence emerged of a reluctance by some officers to prosecute 'nice, law abiding citizens'. Findings suggested that for some officers, education was the 'fairer' approach in some situations. Officers described support for the use of roadside education, and saw it as a viable alternative to prosecution when considering the implications that it would have for drivers' licenses and therefore subsequent legal road use:

"Personally, I'm not in the business of taking away people's driving licenses. If I've got someone new in front of me who's got maybe six points three or four years ago for a different offence, and if I deal with them from mobile phone, it's gonna lose them their license". (RPU officer, 2 years' experience).

However, officers also suggested that they would resort to prosecution where roadside education was considered by them to be ineffective for a specific driver based on the officer's assessment of that person and their passing or failing of 'the attitude test':

"A lot of people are receptive to education. I'm more than willing to give them advice and education at the roadside, but if they're not receptive, then I think sometimes you've got no choice other than to go down the prosecution route". (RPU officer, 20 years' experience).

Education was, however, seen to be 'deserved' by some drivers, and on occasion made the present interaction easier for both parties, as well as being seen to offer longer term benefits around the maintenance of policing by consent:

"I'm very aware I don't want to ruin people's lives either. It might be the first time they've ever been in contact with the police, on the road, and you're going to possibly be having to knock on that person's door, for a witness statement, something serious happened outside the house or they're a victim of crime and you're gonna go knock the door and go "You're a witness to X,Y,Z offence, can I have a statement please?" and they go, "no, you took my driving license off me 6 years ago because I was on my mobile phone. The knock on effects of dealing with people harshly, I think, are quite harmful". (RPU officer, 2 years' experience).

"I don't tend to prosecute what I perceive to be the law-abiding folk cause when I'm in a sticky situation, and I'm wrestling around on the floor with someone, experience tells me that, for want of a better phrase, Middle England, who perceive they've just been persecuted on the motorway for doing 80, they're still gonna come and help the police, however, they might just think twice before they do". (RPU officer, 29 years' experience).

Alongside some variance in application of the law, officers therefore reported strong support for greater public education on the dangers of phone use and stated that they try to offer education in their roadside encounters with offenders. However, the education they offer is focused on future compliance with the law, including (as demonstrated below) problematically *promoting* the use of handsfree technology (also see Fig. 6).

"They've all got Bluetooth capabilities now, so if I stop someone for using the mobile phone, my first question is 'why aren't you using Bluetooth?'" (RPU officer, 12 years' experience).

"Many people are stopped using mobile phones, texting or on the phone, and [I ask] 'Why have you not got your phone connected to the car?'" (RPU officer, 2 years' experience).

"Yeah, with this guy in particular, I just said "you know, you have got Bluetooth facility in your van?!". So I do kind of go down that route first and he did have Bluetooth, it just failed to connect, so he just thought he'd pick up the phone. So, I do kind of give a bit of education about distracted driving." (Response officer, 8 years' experience).

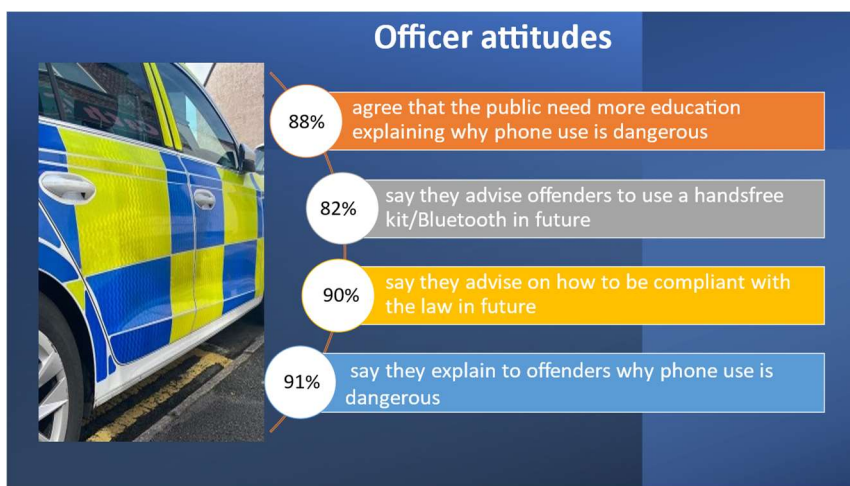


Figure 6: Summary of percentage agreement from officers on statements relating to roadside encounters with offenders (N= 411)

While officer willingness to engage in roadside education is valuable, data on their attitudes and understanding of the dangers of phone use demonstrates some misunderstandings which seem to be leading to them offering problematic advice to offenders (see Fig. 7).

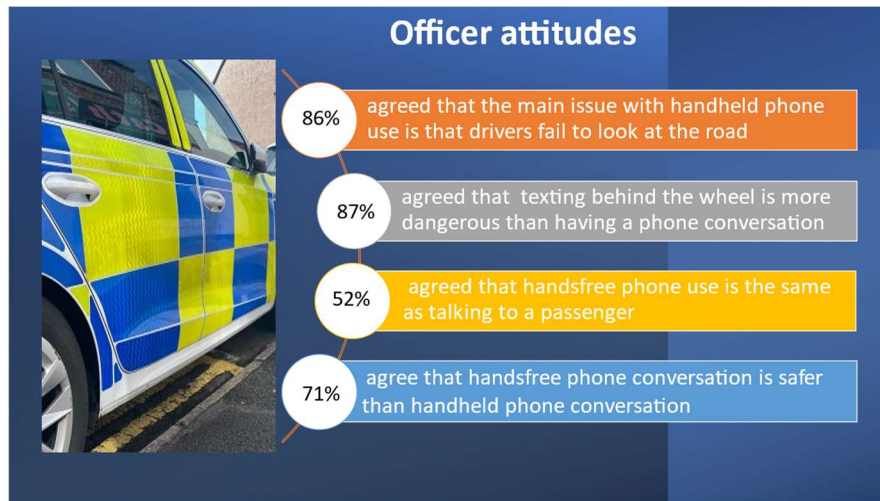


Figure 7: Officer self-reported views on the issue of phone distraction (N=411)

This ties into the qualitative theme of **resistance to educating about the dangers of handsfree**. Some officers are clearly keen to educate where they feel it is appropriate but, as shown above, may be communicating erroneous information relating to handsfree phone use being safer than handheld use. Other officers, however, show a general resistance to educating handheld offenders on the dangers of handsfree use. Resistance stemmed from a range of different (and sometimes overlapping) beliefs. These include the belief that handsfree use is not dangerous because it does not involve manual engagement with a device; the belief that drivers will not listen/believe that it is dangerous; the belief that denial of handsfree phone use would take away a freedom drivers valued; the belief that a handsfree ban is unenforceable. The following quotes evidence the range of issues deterring officers from educating drivers against using their phone handsfree:

"The academics will argue that any phone call is distractionary, which I can't argue against, but I'd say it's got to be less of a distraction than a Bluetooth handset because you aren't ****ing about with your phone". (RPU officer, 12 years' experience).

"I am fortunate that my car does have the interactive, so as soon as I come in [the car], it's the music comes on or whatever channel and you can change it by the steering wheel so I don't have to take my hands off the steering wheel for anything or look at anything else" (RPU officer, 7 years' experience).

"It's a non-starter from the beginning. Just totally unenforceable. So, if you try and have that conversation with someone [about the risks of handsfree], you will end up getting lip service and a nodding dog... So let's not waste their time or my time." (RPU officer, 25 years' experience).

"I don't agree with [the legality of] it at all, but you can - I can't stop you using the phone, if it's in the handsfree and it's through speakers through, you know, the Bluetooth and all that, I can't stop you doing that in law." (RPU officer, 15 years' experience).

"I think for us to lecture somebody about being on their handsfree in the car - if it's legal then they're just never gonna, you know, that's what you just gonna hit [hits wall], hit that all the time. Yeah, I think you, you know, you're fighting a losing battle as the police." (RPU officer, 21 years' experience).

"It's like taking away people's freedoms, isn't it? [banning or educating on dangers of handsfree] Their luxuries of, you know, initially when they're stopped, they made an offence to use a handheld mobile phone. They've still got their luxury using their phone, but it's in the cradle and they can still talk, which isn't taken away." (RPU officer, 20 years' experience).

As the above quotes demonstrate, officers who expressed these views appeared (understandably) to be foregrounding *the law* in their thought processes, and to be – first and foremost – thinking about their role as law enforcers rather than as road safety advocates, and being reluctant to give advice or guidance that seemingly went beyond what their legal 'toolkit' provided. They were (as discussed elsewhere) happy to educate, but only by providing information that dovetailed with the messaging communicated by the law. In the final case, above, the officer suggests that they would

be reluctant to advise a driver to stop doing something that was legal, expressing this in terms of their ‘freedom’ to live as a law-abiding person.

Taken together, data suggest that officers consider the main issue with phone use is the manual distraction it imposes, which causes drivers to take their eyes away from the road and their hands away from the wheel. While this is an understandable stance, given the role of police in enforcing law, it demonstrates a lack of awareness of how phone use is cognitively distracting.

Differences in attitudes between Roads Policing Unit (RPU) and Response officers

To ascertain whether there were any differences in attitudes between those officers who are part of an RPU and those who are not, we conducted individual Chi-square tests of difference on several of the survey questions⁴. While 68% (N=279) of our sample were associated with an RPU, responses are weighted in this analysis, meaning it is possible to determine statistically whether responses between the two groups (RPU or non-RPU) exist. We found significant differences between the two groups across a range of measures.

Results showed that there was largely strong agreement amongst all officers on the direction of agreement to specific statements. Those in an RPU were more likely to consider phone use to be a top safety issue and to regularly encounter phone offenders; felt more strongly that phone offences should always be prosecuted and agreed strongly that the main problem with handheld use is drivers not looking at the road. RPU officers reported greater confidence in their charging decisions, and more often claimed to provide advice to offenders in which they highlight why phone use is dangerous. RPU officers also showed greater disagreement or ambivalence with statements suggesting handsfree use is safer than handheld use and is equivalent to talking with a passenger. A breakdown of these data is provided in Appendix 2.

While these differences are relatively small (albeit, statistically significant), they may point to specific differences in the awareness of RPU and non RPU officers of issues relating to phone-based distraction, which could also be affected by the frequency with which they encounter offenders.

Did the interactive experience affect officer attitudes to phone use?

After completing the intervention, there was broad agreement amongst officers that they understood the research findings and that the task was effective in demonstrating the limits of an individual’s attention (see Fig. 8). Over half of officers (N=232) said they were convinced by the research findings on the dangers of handsfree. While we might have hoped for this number to be higher, it is worth noting that very few officers disagreed with this statement (6%, N=21) – instead 30% (N=108) were unsure.

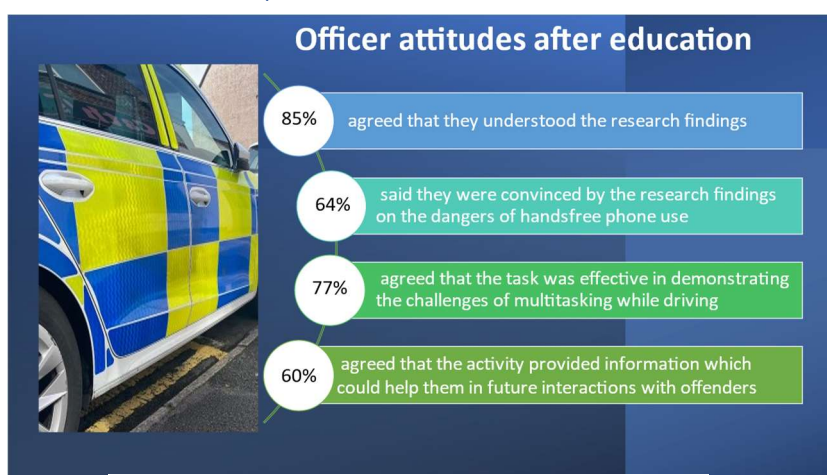


Figure 8: Officer attitudes on the intervention

Qualitative feedback offered further support for the interactive, with comments highlighting how the information could usefully inform some future interactions by providing explanations for the dangers of handsfree phone use. In terms of officer views on their own performance, 44% (N=85) said they expected to perform better than they did (39%, N=70, were ambivalent) and there were a range of views on how surprised officers were by the research findings related to handsfree use (38%, N=74) were surprised, 32.5% (N=59) ambivalent and 30% (N=55) were not surprised). Taken together, this suggests that the interactive was an effective approach to communicating research findings.

⁴ For the detailed results of these analyses see appendix 2

Did the interactive affect officer's future intentions?

Having engaged with the task, 41.3% (N=78) of officers agreed that handsfree phone use represents a serious safety issue. Again, notably only 16.8% (N=30) of officers disagreed that this was the case, while 41.8% (N=75) were unsure. Interestingly, even though 70% (N=130) of officers said they would continue to advise offenders to use handsfree in the future, to ensure compliance with the law, 72% (N=136) also said they would advise offenders on avoiding handsfree where possible (see Fig. 9).

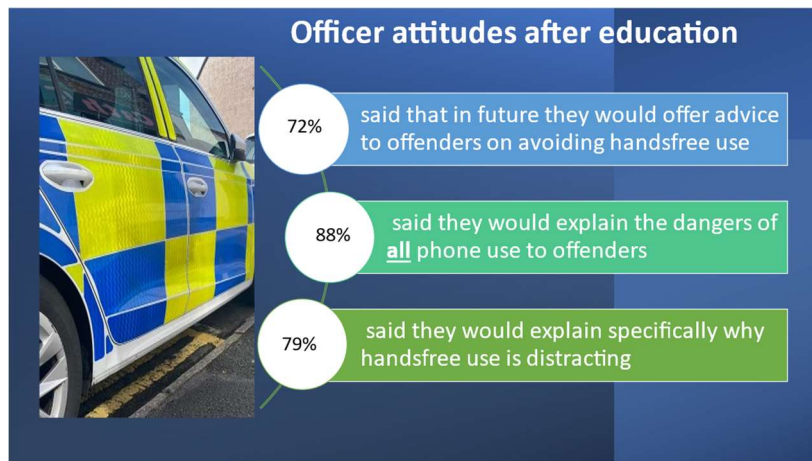


Figure 9: Officer intentions after the intervention

This distinction perhaps highlights that individual officer attitudes and the requirement to offer advice which leads to compliance with the law may be slightly at odds. When this happens, officers appear to favour compliance over safety. However, it also suggests a willingness to offer education on handsfree which was not evident prior to the intervention:

“I love bits of information and facts and legislation you can throw at people. So, if they start to argue back I can say, ‘well actually, do you know that...’ and that’s just a great little bit of knowledge to have in the back pocket if somebody’s, you know, wants to have that discussion at the side of the road, or have that disagreement, it’s a great tool to have knowledge. It’s power isn’t it, at the end of the day.” (Response officer, 2.5 years’ experience).

This same officer talked about the information being presented as new and informative, contradicting previous behaviours and self-perceptions of driving capability:

“To be fair, that is completely new to me. I’d never heard any of that kind of research behind. Like I said, that is one thing I do do. So, say if my wife calls me and I’m on my way home, I’ll take the phone call in the car. Yeah. And to be fair. It’s never felt like it’s impacted my driving. But like I say, you know, it must if you’re concentrating on what that person’s saying.” (Response officer, 2.5 years’ experience).

Other officers also recognised some of the information as being meaningful/logical:

“Yeah, just the handsfree thing..., it’s as bad as it being in your hand, I think because you’re still having that conversation with somebody. So, whether it’s in your hand, obviously the offence is when it’s in your hands, but it’s still having the, it’s still the offence, isn’t it? It’s just in the eyes of the law it’s acceptable in a cradle handsfree, but doesn’t make a lot of difference does it? I don’t think. It’s still being used, still distracted, you’re still concentrating on that phone call and not your drive, and then your standard of driving definitely slips, 100%.” (RPU officer, 15 years’ experience).

Alongside analysis of qualitative data and overall percentage attitudes on the effectiveness of the interactive in changing attitudes, we completed further quantitative analyses on five key questions which were asked both prior to receiving education and afterwards⁵. The questions included in the analyses were:

1. Hands-free phone conversation is safer than a handheld phone conversation
2. Current mobile phone law improves road safety
3. Other offences, such as speeding or drink driving, present a greater danger than illegal phone use by drivers
4. Drivers using their handheld phones while stationary don’t pose a serious safety concern
5. When I have pulled someone over for a phone offence, I advise/will advise offenders to use a hands-free kit/Bluetooth in future.

⁵ For full statistical analyses and discussion of all items in detail, see appendix 2.

As all participants provided two responses to each of these statements (one pre-and one post- exposure to the interactive) a paired samples test was used. This allowed us to identify whether there were significant differences in attitudes to key statements between the two testing times, using the pre intervention scores as the baseline (control)⁶. Analyses revealed that distribution of responses significantly changed for four of the five statements above, suggesting a change in self-reported officer attitude following exposure to the interactive. The only question which did not show a change was item 3 (see above). Of particular note were significant changes in officer attitude to the perceived safety of handsfree phone conversations and the use of a phone while stationary in traffic (see Figs. 10 and 11).

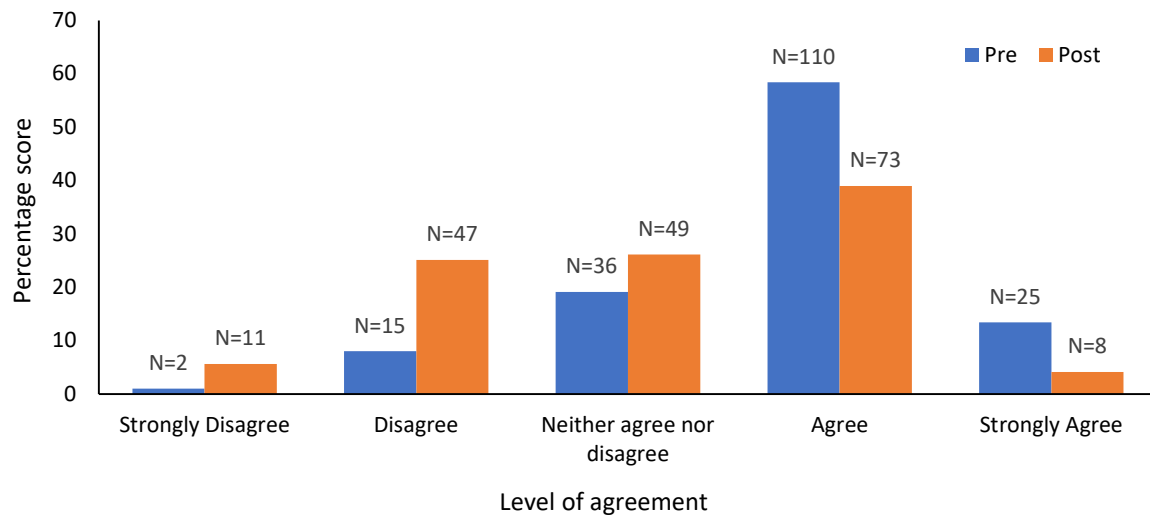


Figure 10: Agreement scores of officers pre and post exposure to the intervention on the statement: handsfree phone use is safer than handheld use. Sample size, 188

Distribution of responses for views on handsfree phone use changed following engagement with the interactive. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(4, N = 362) = 12.23, p < .001$) meaning there is less than 0.1% likelihood that this result occurred by chance alone. Figure 11. shows that while 43% of officers agreed that handsfree conversation is safer than handheld conversation, far more officers chose to disagree or strongly disagree after the education, and significantly fewer recorded an agree or strongly agree verdict. As such, the distribution of scores has shifted, with some clearly changing their initial agreement views to disagreement, and others shifting from agreement to being unsure (neither agree nor disagree).

A similar pattern of responses is evident in relation to stationary phone use. Distribution of views on the seriousness of stationary phone use significantly changed following engagement with the interactive⁷.

⁶ We used a marginal homogeneity test (Stuart-Maxwell test), which is an extension of the traditional Chi-square test, which allows us to identify whether the distribution of responses differs between time one and time two questioning.

⁷ This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(4, N = 382) = -13.52, p < .001$) meaning there is less than 0.1% likelihood that this result occurred by chance alone.

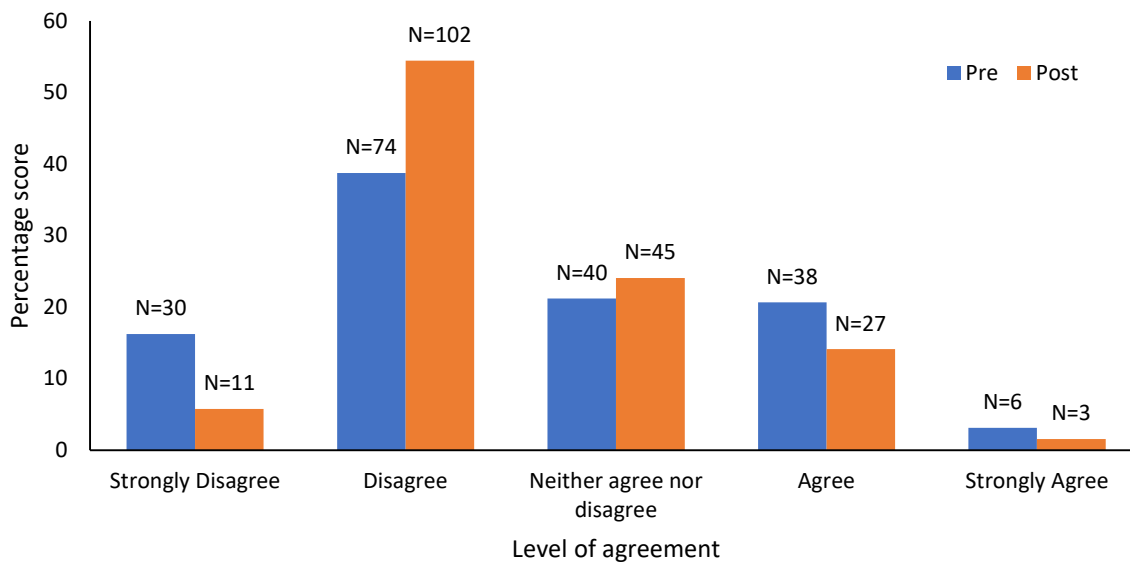


Figure 11: Pre and post interactive officer responses relating to the statement: Drivers using their handheld phones while stationary don't pose a serious safety issue. Sample size, 188

Figure 11 demonstrates a shift in attitude following the interactive, with lower levels of agreement and higher disagreement after receiving education. The largest change is shown in the disagree category, though it is also noteworthy that fewer officers strongly disagreed at time 2 than at time 1. As the intervention did not specifically discuss or demonstrate stationary phone use, it seems that officers have applied their understanding of the cognitive roots of phone distraction, gained from the interactive, to different forms of phone use.

Finally, in terms of advising offenders, we again found a significant shift in officer attitude after engagement with the interactive⁸ in terms of the likelihood of them advising offenders to use handsfree. In this instance, around 70% (N=287) of officers agreed, after receiving education, that they would advise offenders to use handsfree in the future (compared with 81%, N=333) agreement prior to education). The attitude shift here seems to be driven by a reduction in strong agreement and increases in disagreement and ambivalence. Taken in the context of officer willingness to offer roadside education on handsfree use (discussed above), this preserved intention to suggest handsfree use to offenders is understandable given that police must enforce current law. However, this points to the need for a clear directive for officers in the form of guidance relating to the promotion of handsfree phone use: their own (changed) attitude alone will not necessarily influence their practice.

Taken together, findings demonstrate that a short interactive activity can effectively change officer attitudes on different aspects of phone use, resulting in an increased likelihood of them offering roadside education on the dangers of handsfree phone use. Analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data support this conclusion. While this is very promising, there is of course more work to be done, as this one intervention alone does not directly address all aspects of the themes identified in initial interviews. For example, there is clear evidence of officer support for education on handsfree use for offenders (and the wider public) following engagement with the interactive, which addresses aspects of the **resistance to educating about the dangers of handsfree** theme. Similarly, officer attitudes were demonstrably changed in relation to aspects of the **focus on handheld phone use** theme, in terms of handsfree being seen as less safe, and stationary phone use being considered more problematic, after education. Data also point to a shift in attitude with respect to the **considerations for prosecution** theme, as officers acknowledged that safety and legality may not always align. However, there are some aspects of these themes which require further work, including focused intervention on aspects of discretion and prosecuting 'law abiding' citizens, the recommendation to use handsfree in the future and some views that while handsfree may be less safe than they initially thought, it is still safer than handheld use (e.g. a persisting focus on manual/visual distraction).

⁸ ($\chi^2(4, N = 372) = 5.89, p < .001$)

Future intentions for officers' own behaviour at work and at home

Having established the interactive's ability to change officer attitudes in some key areas, it is interesting to consider the impact of education on officers' intentions for their own driving, both at work and outside of work. This ties into the theme of **officers' own road safety expertise** which revealed evidence of some officers believing their role and training mitigated the risks associated with phone use.

While 88.8% (N=179) of officers agreed that more education for the general public explaining why phone use is dangerous is needed and 61.5% (N=124) agreed that members of the public should not use their phones at all whilst driving, these views did not apply universally to their own phone use. Only 37% (N=75) of officers agreed that they would benefit from more education on how and why phone use is dangerous and 35% (N=70) of respondents felt that, as police officers, they were less prone to distraction due to increased training (25.5%, N=51, were unsure). This factor was mirrored in interview data, both before and after the interactive:

"Our advanced driving course that we do is massively based around looking at what's in front of you and try not to get distracted. We're taught as advanced drivers to look so far further up the road of what's in front of you than the normal everyday driver." (RPU officer, post-interactive, 7 years' experience).

"I would say being an advanced driver, I mean, obviously you do take on more. More distractions, the noise, at speeds you know you've got the radio in your ear. So, you're probably communicating with your mates, the radio's going, you're thinking about what you're going to... and then...yeah, you just, I think you just get muscle memory to it, you know?" (RPU officer, pre-interactive, 21 years' experience).

"When you start on this job same as any job. You're overwhelmed....But you get used to filtering a lot, so I could sit here, talk to you and I could have the radio on him here and not I wouldn't skip a beat. But you'll hear certain things and you will immediately start paying attention to the radio. So you filter a lot of the distractions." (RPU officer, pre-interactive, 12 years' experience).

"I'll be taking it all in. There'll be some points where I probably won't take bits and bobs in because the bit [of road] I'm negotiating at the time is the bit, I have to, focus all my, yeah, but the ability all police officers in this job have to do is be able to switch, quite literally like that... but sometimes you just have to flick it the other way and ignore that and just get through and negotiate what's in front of you." (RPU officer, pre-interactive, 19 years' experience).

This evidence suggests that there is some resistance to safety messaging regarding handsfree distraction when applied to officers themselves, while also indicating that the demands of the police role are high in terms of possible distractions.

Behaviour at work

59% of officers said that having engaged with the interactive activity they would not change their own behaviour at work. 33.3% said they would change their behaviour (7.7% did not respond). Of those who said they would change their behaviour, 52% said they would limit their handsfree use, 32% said they would only use handsfree in an emergency and 12% said they would stop handsfree use at work (3% did not specify how they would change their behaviour). Of those who said they would not change their behaviour, it is noteworthy that 63% said they do not use handsfree at work anyway. Other responses are summarised in Figure 12. Note that respondents could select multiple responses to the question 'why do you think you won't change your behaviour when driving at work?'.

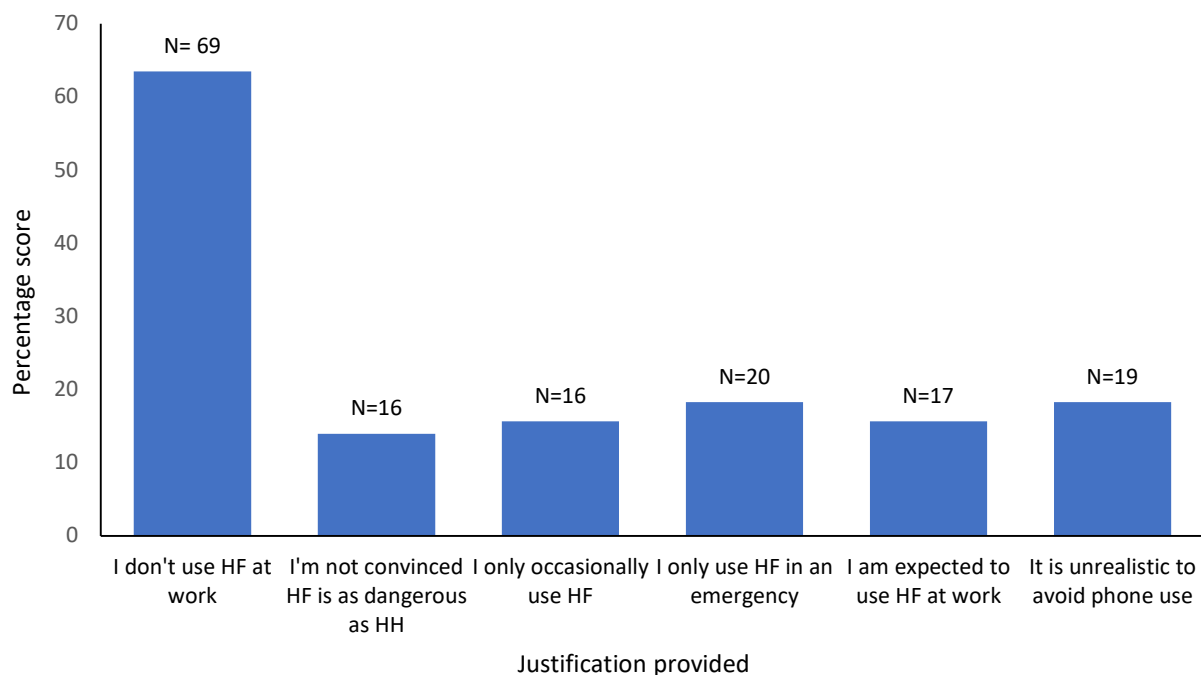


Figure 12: Officer justifications for not changing behaviour when driving at work following education on the dangers of handsfree phone use. Sample size, 157

While it is clear that most officers who said they would not change their behaviour do not use handsfree devices at work, other responses demonstrate that handsfree is only occasionally used, or used in an emergency. These responses suggest that officers think that occasional/emergency use is not problematic – something research does not support. As these factors were also reflected in the responses of those who said they *would* change their behaviour, this suggests that it would be useful to provide further education to specifically explain this issue. Likewise, it would be useful to provide guidance on expectations for use of phones at work (whether handheld or handsfree) to address responses suggesting that it would be unrealistic to avoid phone use, and that handsfree phone use is expected at work. Of particular note in the free response part of this question is that several officers mentioned the use of personal radio, highlighting that using radios (whilst driving) is an integral part of the job and that radio use has clear parallels with phone use.

Behaviour outside of work

There was a direct split in responses relating to whether officers would change their behaviour when driving outside of a work context, following the education, with 50% saying they would change their behaviour and 50% saying they would not. Of those who said they would change their behaviour, 54.4% said they would limit their handsfree use, 31.2% said they would only use handsfree in an emergency and 14.3% said they would stop all handsfree use when driving outside a work context. As with the question relating to behaviour at work, a proportion of officers (40.2%) reported that they do not use handsfree outside work anyway. Other responses are shown in Figure 13.

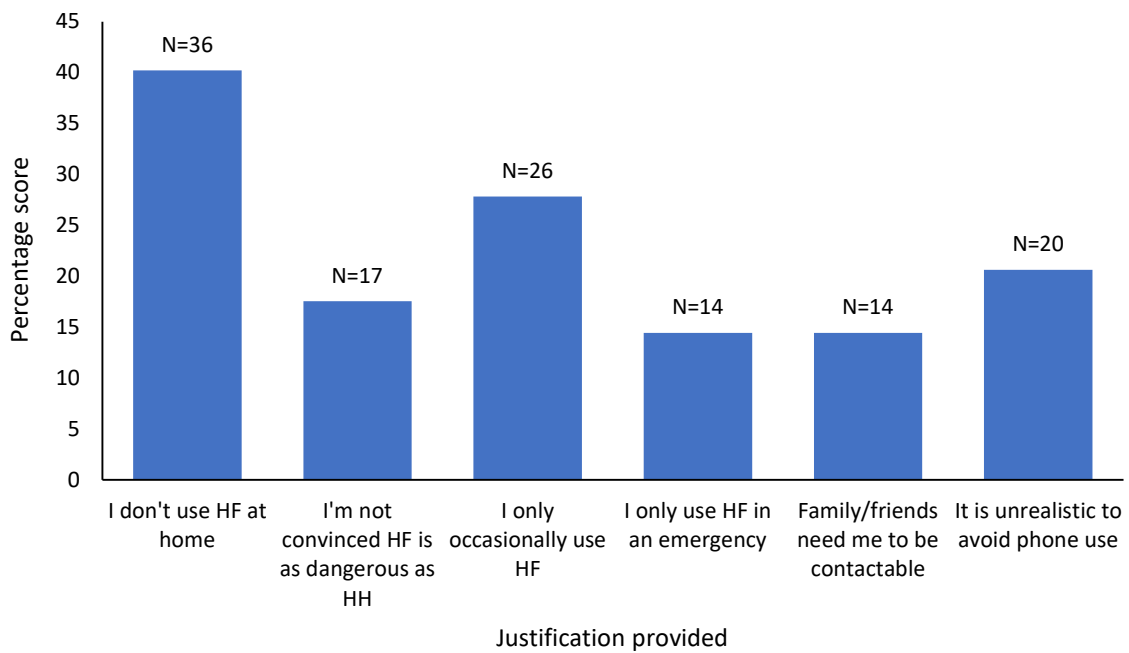


Figure 13: Officer justifications for not changing behaviour when driving outside of work following education on the dangers of handsfree phone use. Sample size, 127

As with the previous section, it is clear that some officers consider handsfree phone use which is occasional/used in an emergency to be less problematic, and other responses suggest that changing behaviour would be challenging, due to needing to be contactable by family/friends. This parallels findings from work with ordinary drivers (Wells and Savigar, 2019). Again, a small number of responses (17.5%, N=17) indicate a lack of belief in the equal dangers of handsfree phone use.

“Yeah, so I will in my own car try and remove distractions. I've got Bluetooth in my car, and I've got Apple CarPlay so if something needs to be answered it will come up on the screen and I can quickly see without even touching my phone. If somebody wants me, they can ring me and the phone will ring inside the car without me even touching my phone.” (RPU officer, post-interactive, 2 years' experience).

“I think hands free is a lot better. My bugbear with all this is you have people holding the phone, which to me...what's the difference between that and smoking? Because that's a massive distraction, but there's nothing for that apart from, again, not being in proper control, or driving with due care.” (RPU officer, post-interactive, 7 years' experience).

As such, it seems there is still some work to be done to convince all officers of the dangers of their own handsfree phone use. As the interactive takes the approach of demonstrating the individual's own distraction, and given that 44% (N=85) of officers said they expected to perform better than they did (39%, N=70, were ambivalent), future iterations of the interactive could usefully address perceived enhanced ability more directly. This could take the form of a specific interactive which is directed at police officers, rather than the general public, and therefore brings role specific distractions more to the forefront.

Summary of officer attitudes

Figure 14 summarises the key findings from the survey and interviews according to the 4 themes identified in analysis.



Figure 14: Summary of officer views organised by qualitative themes identified

4.0 Conclusion and recommendations

This project has achieved its original objectives and in doing so has demonstrated the effectiveness of an interactive activity in changing police officer attitudes to handsfree mobile phone use.

Objective 1: Understand drivers' views on their likely response to having been caught using a handheld phone, to ascertain if a move to handsfree use would be likely.

This objective was met through the gathering of survey data from the general public. Findings demonstrated that approximately 60% of drivers who claimed to use their phones handheld, would continue some form of dangerous phone use (handheld, concealed handheld, reduced handheld, handsfree) even after being caught and prosecuted for phone use. 33% of respondents said that following prosecution they would switch to legal handsfree phone use, demonstrating a displacement effect to a legal form of distracted driving.

Objective 2: Understand current police officer understandings of handsfree distraction and the way it informs their practice.

This objective was met via detailed surveying and interviewing of police officers regarding their interactions with mobile phone offenders and their views and use of the law. Results identified that the majority of officers believed handsfree phone use to be safer than handheld use, and that most advised handheld offenders to use a handsfree kit in future. Over 90% of officers said that they explain why phone use is dangerous to offenders. This suggests a lack of awareness amongst officers of the dangers of handsfree phone use with associated impact on the advice they provide to offenders.

Objective 3: Expose police officers to an interactive intervention designed to alter their thinking around handsfree distraction.

This objective was met by providing officers the opportunity to engage with and complete an interactive, evidence-based activity, which enabled them to experience their own distraction, and then explained the dangers of handsfree phone use.

Objective 4: Revisit officer understandings of handsfree distraction post-intervention and measure any changes in their attitudes.

This objective was met by repeated surveying/interviewing of officers after the educational intervention. Exposure to the evidence-based education demonstrably changed officer understanding and attitudes relating to the safety of handsfree phone use. Attitudes to the seriousness/danger of both handsfree- and stationary phone use were also changed via education.

Objective 5: Establish if any changes in attitudes map on to intended changes in practice.

After exposure to education, as well as marked changes in attitude, most officers agreed that they would offer roadside education on the dangers of all phone use, would advise drivers that handsfree use is legal, but should ideally be avoided, and (based on the knowledge gained in the project) would explain specifically why handsfree phone use is dangerous. As officers also said they would continue to advise offenders how to be compliant in future (by using handsfree), the final piece of the puzzle needs to be a directive for officers to feel empowered not to recommend handsfree phone use to offenders (see recommendations).

No individual intervention will achieve universal attitude and behaviour change. As is evident in this report, while many attitudes demonstrably changed, a few officers remained unconvinced of the equal dangers of handsfree phone use, while others showed reduced certainty in their views following education. Nevertheless, this project has been successful in identifying that a 5-minute interactive activity can significantly change attitudes. Having achieved this, further work can be undertaken to fine-tune the approach, and follow up participation with further information for officers, with a view to further increasing its effectiveness in changing attitudes and future behaviours.

The findings of this project have already been disseminated via conference presentations, a blog piece for RSGB, and a short film is being made to share with officers and the wider public.

Recommendations

Objective 6: Develop recommendations for the training of police officers in responding to instances of mobile phone distraction

Based on this project's findings, we offer the following recommendations

- Police officers who are likely to encounter drivers in their operational role should routinely be provided with education on the dangers of handsfree phone use. This information can inform their own practice at work and outside of work, and the advice they provide to handheld mobile phone offenders they interact with. The education offered to officers should contain evidence-based information on the dangers of different forms of phone use, and provide guidance on how to deal with resistance to such information from offenders.
- Police officers who engage with mobile phone offenders should be provided with clear guidance which advises against routinely recommending handsfree phone use as a legal alternative behaviour. Whilst many officers agreed that handsfree use is dangerous, in the absence of an instruction otherwise, they will continue to advise handsfree to help negotiate potentially tricky encounters.
- Attempts should be made to ensure that handsfree phone use is not a requirement for police officers in the workplace. Such guidance should indicate that any type of handsfree phone use represents a danger and should therefore be avoided.

- Further education for officers on perceived enhanced ability in multitasking should be offered. This is important in terms of workplace safety in relation to expectations for multitasking while driving and associated incidents.

In terms of implementing these findings, the project team are in discussions with the NPCC's lead for Roads Policing who is keen to disseminate findings and provide a recommendation that officers do not advise offenders to adopt handsfree phone use. To facilitate this, the team are presenting the findings to NRPOII and the wider NPCC board and have drafted a letter to be sent to officers. It is intended that this work will be expanded to consider the implications of findings related to officers' own driving in the workplace and approaches to reduce officer distraction. The team have also created a video, to be shared with police officers, which provides responses to common challenges regarding handsfree phone use, which can aid them in their interactions with offenders. Finally, the team are now producing infographics and additional resources which can be used to both educate police officers and the general public.

5.0 Project approach commentary

The project progressed well throughout with all partners being fully engaged. The inclusion of partner police forces was highly beneficial to the data collection stage, allowing access to participants and a potential pathway to impact. This is illustrated by the keenness of officers to engage with the research, reflected in us conducting more in-depth interviews than originally planned. It was clear that officers were engaged and keen to contribute and learn from the project.

We are grateful to The Road Safety Trust for allowing us to add the YouGov survey element to our project design after the project had started. We believe this added an important layer of understanding in terms of the potential for offenders to adapt their behaviour in legal but dangerous ways, which is important context for our work with officers. The findings of the survey have also been valuable in demonstrating why police roadside encounters with offenders are so important, and why accurate educational messages about handsfree danger should be woven into the practice of interventions that are more remote (such as AI cameras or 'dash cam' submissions).

Another aspect of the project that worked well was the day conference we hosted. This conference brought together police practitioners, road safety professionals, policy makers and academics for a day of dedicated discussion on driver distraction. By presenting our interim findings at this conference, to an audience of influential individuals, we were able to gain feedback on the project, secure a commitment from the NPCC road safety lead to share findings and provide evidence-based guidance to police officers, and promote evidence-based practice more widely. The collaborative approach to knowledge generation and exchange was invaluable.

Future Research

More work now needs to be done to explore the issue of discretion versus consistency in prosecution decisions. Whilst discretion will always be key to frontline operational policing decisions, this needs to be understood in the context of the provision of the right advice and education, for the right reasons. Our findings show some officer reluctance to prosecute 'law abiding citizens', some inaccurate views about what 'really' constitutes problematic behaviour, and some views on being 'fair' and proportionate. The attitude change achieved in the project goes some way to addressing these issues, but further research is needed in this regard. This may be particularly important for officers who are not assigned to an RPU, as they tended to record greater feelings of being unsure or ambivalent in regard to the appropriate way to navigate their interactions with offenders.

Another aspect of the project which would benefit from further research is officers' attitudes to their own driving, both inside and outside of work. While the interactive was effective in convincing many officers that members of the public should not use their phones, and should receive greater education, many did not feel this was the case for themselves. While steps can be made to reduce the requirement for phone use in the workplace, further tailored education for officers, offered after the interactive, could usefully address the theme of perceived enhanced ability. Such education could usefully communicate that having advanced driver training, experience and expertise does not affect attentional capacity and the ability to safely multitask. An interactive that more accurately replicates the police

driver 'cockpit' experience could be considered to increase the relevance of the interactive experience to this target audience. For this reason, future research could usefully evaluate the use of virtual reality approaches to delivering education to officers. Efforts should also be made to further investigate police officer experience in the workplace with regard to their own phone use. While this project was focused on interactions between officers and offenders, it also revealed differences between officer views on the general driving public's behaviours and their own driving. As officer safety is a clear priority, future research into distraction-related incidents within the police force would be beneficial, with a view to developing best-practice guidelines to improve safety.

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Appendix 1

YouGov survey questions

1. The following questions are about mobile phone usage while driving. Please remember that your answers are used for research purposes only and remain anonymous. Which, if any, of the following ways do you use your phone while driving? (Please select all that apply. If you never use a phone while driving at all, please choose the Not applicable option)

- I text using my phone while holding it in my hand
- I make calls on my phone while holding it in my hand
- I use my phone to play games/ watch videos/ live stream/ search the internet/ use social media/ select music while holding it in my hand
- I text using handsfree technology
- I make handsfree phone calls
- I use my phone handsfree to search online/ use a digital assistant
- Other
- Don't know
- Not applicable - I don't use a phone in any way while driving
- Prefer not to say

2. For the following question please imagine, as a driver, if you were caught by the police using your phone while holding it (e.g., texting, making or receiving calls, using a sat nav, etc)...Which, if any, of the following would you choose to do in the future? (Please select all that apply. If any of your answers don't appear in the list below, please type them in the "Other" box)

- In future, I would not use my phone at all while driving
- In future, I would switch to legally using my phone handsfree
- In future, I would limit my handheld phone use
- In future, I would continue to use my handheld phone as before
- In future, I would try to hide my handheld phone use
- Other
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Appendix 2

1. Comparison of RPU and non-RPU officer responses

We ran analyses on all statements/questions provided in the survey prior to the interactive activity. The items listed below are those which returned a significant difference in responses between RPU and non RPU officers (see Table 1 for the specific level of agreement for each item):

- I regularly encounter mobile phone offenders ($\chi^2(4, 382) = 44.76, p < .001$)
- Illegal phone use represents a serious safety issue ($\chi^2(4, 382) = 17.36, p < .001$)
- The main issue with handheld mobile phone use is that drivers fail to look at the road ($\chi^2(4, 382) = 11.52, p < .05$)
- I am sometimes not sure whether to charge a driver with a mobile phone offence or another related offence ($\chi^2(4, 377) = 25.42, p < .001$)
- I do not consider handheld mobile phone use by drivers to be a top safety concern ($\chi^2(4, 377) = 22.84, p < .001$)
- Illegal phone use should always be prosecuted ($\chi^2(4, 382) = 17.36, p < .001$)
- Handsfree phone use is similar to talking to a passenger ($\chi^2(4, 362) = 15.90, p < .01$)
- Hands-free phone conversation is safer than a handheld phone conversation ($\chi^2(4, 362) = 22.26, p < .001$)

Importantly, in most cases, as shown in Table 1, the differences between those in an RPU and non RPU officers were in strength of agreement rather than direction of agreement. That is, the direction of agreement (largely in agreement or largely not in agreement) was relatively consistent across groups, but that those in an RPU tended to agree or disagree more strongly to a statement than those not in an RPU and were less likely to be ambivalent (neither agree nor disagree) about a statement.

Those in an RPU were more likely to: consider phone use to be a top safety issue; think prosecution for all phone use is appropriate; regularly encounter offenders; and think that the main problem with handheld use is drivers not looking at the road. Those not in a dedicated RPU were less sure about charging options, did not necessarily consider phone use to be a top safety concern, and did not consistently think phone offenders should always be prosecuted. Regardless of RPU status, all respondents said they offer advice to those they have caught on remaining compliant with the law and on using HF in future.

Table 1: Level of agreement amongst RPU and non-RPU officers for specific survey statements

	RPU level of agreement	Non-RPU level of agreement
I regularly encounter mobile phone offenders	75.2 % (N=94)	50% (N= 39)
Illegal phone use represents a serious safety issue	94.7 % (N=128)	83% (N=55)
The main issue with handheld mobile phone use is that drivers fail to look at the road	86% (N=110)	80% (N=50)
I am sometimes not sure whether to charge a driver with a mobile phone offence or another related offence	16% (N=102)	37% (N=37)
I do not consider handheld mobile phone use by drivers to be a top safety concern	5.3% (N=5)	16.1% (N=5)
Illegal phone use should always be prosecuted	80.5% (N=105)	67% (N=38)
I am sometimes not sure whether to charge a driver with a mobile phone offence or another related offence	16% (N=102)	37% (N=37)
Handsfree phone use is similar to talking to a passenger	47.2% (N=63)	61.4% (N=40)
Hands-free phone conversation is safer than a handheld phone conversation	67.7% (85)	78.5% (N=45)

2. Pre and post-interactive responses: statistical comparison

'Current mobile phone law improves road safety'

Distribution of responses for views on whether current mobile phone law improves road safety also changed following engagement with the interactive. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(4, N = 362) = 11.81, p < .001$) meaning there is less than 0.1% likelihood that this result occurred by chance alone. Figure 15 demonstrates the different distributions of scores for pre and post intervention attitude measures.

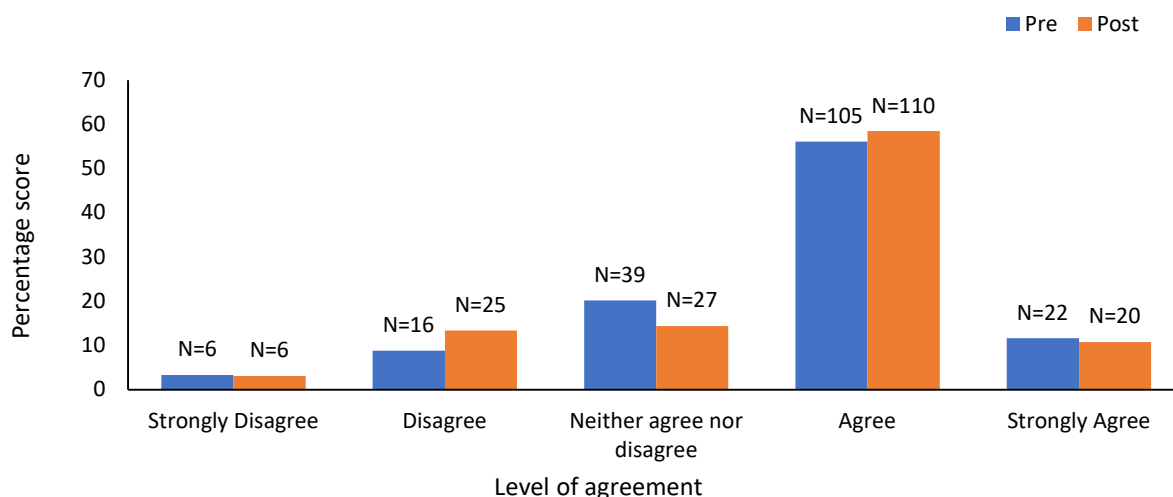


Fig 15: Officer attitudes on effectiveness of the law in terms of safety, pre and post interactive. Sample size, 188

Figure 15 shows that there is still strong agreement amongst officers, both pre and post interactive that current mobile phone law improves road safety. However, it appears that the significant difference in responses stems from some respondents shifting their view from not knowing (neither agree nor disagree) to disagreeing with the statement.

'Other offences, such as speeding or drink driving, present a greater danger than illegal phone use by drivers'

For this question there was no significant change in officer attitude pre and post exposure to the interactive ($\chi^2(4, N = 367) = -0.82, ns$). Here, responses remained stable across time 1 and time 2, with most responses falling into the disagree or ambivalent categories.

'When I have pulled someone over for a phone offence, I advise/would advise offenders to use a hands-free kit/Bluetooth in future'

For this statement, we again found a statistically significant difference between pre- and post- intervention attitude scores ($\chi^2(4, N = 372) = 5.89, p < .001$). Figure 17 demonstrates the different distributions of scores for pre and post intervention attitude measures.

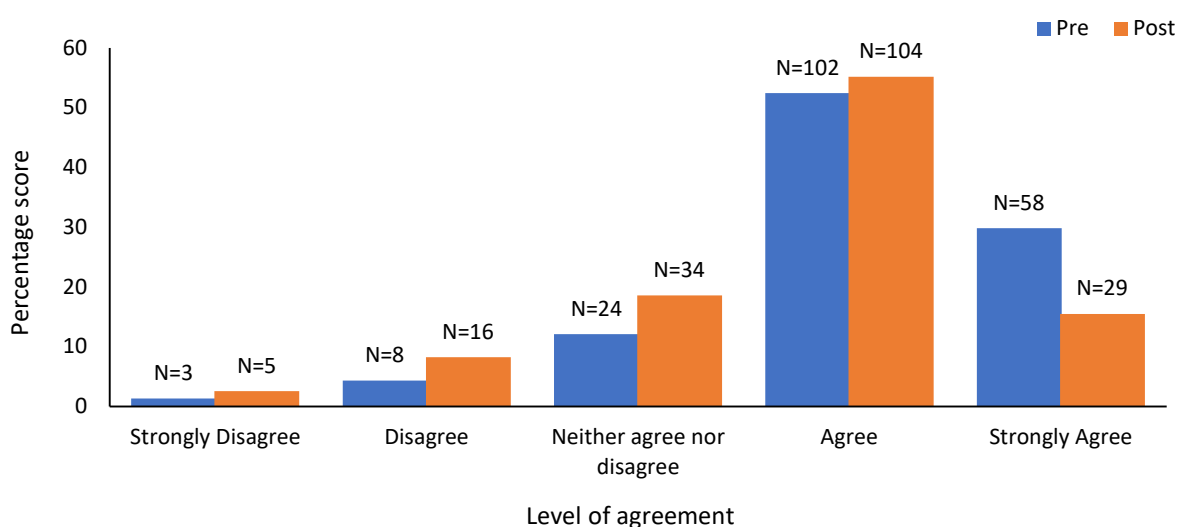


Figure 16: Pre and post interactive officer attitudes to advice on handsfree use in future

Figure 16 shows the change distribution of attitude scores, indicating a reduction in strong agreement, a slight increase in agreement and decreases in disagreement and ambivalence. However, you will note that the agreement category is still the highest scoring in terms of responses, both pre and post education. This suggests that while individual officer attitudes may have changed, they will continue to advise offenders to be compliant with the law by using HF, for all of the reasons highlighted in this report: in the absence of any directive informing officers not to advise handsfree use, it is understandable that many will continue to do so.