

Press release: 'Distressed' clothing brand sends hard hitting message to young riders

Motorcyclists are more vulnerable than other roads users but without the protection a vehicle can offer, what they wear can make all the difference when they come off their bike.

A new campaign by Highways England, the Government company responsible for the country's motorways and main 'A' roads, is using fashion to raise awareness of safety for young riders on two wheels.

The initiative centres on the concept of a clothing range where each garment has a unique price tag – the difference being instead of monetary value the cost lists a range of injuries or hospital treatments that a young rider could face as a result of an accident.

Stuart Lovatt, Strategic Road User Safety Lead at Highways England said:

The mental and physical cost of not wearing the right motorcycle gear can be far greater than the financial cost. Most young riders will come off their bikes at some point – whether you have popped round the corner for a pint of milk or you are riding further afield to see friends or get to college, you need to be prepared.

Our campaign is designed to encourage discussion around wearing protective clothing and parents can play their part too. As a parent of teenagers myself, I know how much they want to follow fashion but the unexpected can happen close to home and wearing protective gear as well as having the right skills to ride defensively could make all the difference.

The consequences of coming off two wheels at any speed can be more severe than you would think – making sure they are wearing rip-proof clothing as well as the essentials like a helmet, sturdy gloves and footwear can help protect your loved one.

Research carried out to understand the reasons behind the increased number collisions involving young riders shows that:

- Young riders represent just 15% of motorcyclists in Great Britain but represent more than 38% of rider casualties – so a young rider is over 2.5 times more times likely to be injured than someone more experienced
- the majority of riders of small bikes are aged 17-23 and are predominantly male
- most collisions involving motorcycles under 300cc are close to home
- six out of nine of the top hotspots for incidents resulting in death or

serious injury involving young riders are in the South East region – with five being on the south coast

The Highways England campaign features a video of people’s reactions to its new ‘Distressed’ clothing range.

Shoreditch provided the perfect backdrop for the launch of the range at a pop up shop with a twist – hidden cameras followed shoppers browsing the rails and captured their surprise on discovering the true cost of the garments.

The video was premiered at Chichester College.

[Distressed video.](#)

Andrew Green, Executive Principal at Chichester College, said:

We want to ensure our students travel to and from college as safely as possible, and encouraging our young riders to wear the right gear is really important.

The campaign is extremely thought-provoking, with some sobering messages about life-changing injuries which could so easily have been avoided.

We hope it is successful in inspiring riders to think twice before getting on a motorcycle without protective clothing.

Alongside the video, social media is being used to promote the campaign with the hashtag #distressedpopup. This will feature on Highways England’s new Instagram account (@HighwaysEngland), Twitter (@HighwaysEngland) and the official Facebook page.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.