



# Road User Education – Every Child Matters

**Every Child Matters (ECM)** is now the universally accepted Government strategy that aims to ensure that all children and young people achieve their full potential. It provides all those responsible for the delivery of services with an agreed framework in which they can develop and deliver services. All major government departments and many private and voluntary sector agencies use ECM as a reference point for their work. Road User/Safety Education is no exception.

**The framework has five key headings, all of which can link into aspects of road user education:**

- **Be Healthy:** topics such as: walking/cycling rather than travelling by car/powerful two wheeler; appropriate motor vehicle use; drink and drug use; relationships; healthy life styles; good social life are all topics that can be addressed through young peoples involvement with motor vehicle and mobility based activities. This would meet the agendas of most government departments, schools, youth work and health professionals.
- **Stay Safe:** *Stay Safe* provides a clear opportunity to look at road and personal safety, anti-social behaviour etc. But the heading also provides a mandate to work with young people across the whole range of risk taking activities and exploring the issues of perceived and actual risks, including health and safety at work, gender based work etc. This would, therefore, meet the agendas of most partnership agencies, but particularly the Police, YOT teams, Road Safety and the Youth Service.
- **Enjoy and Achieve:** for many young people, access to a motor vehicle and freedom of movement represents a major leap forward in their ability to engage in leisure time activities and have an active social life. Being a qualified driver/rider is often seen as a 'right of passage' and can prove a real boost to a young person's self belief and sense of independence.

Starting from an *Enjoy and Achieve* perspective young people's motivation to engage is high; the motor vehicle and travel, and young people's interest in it, thus provides a great 'vehicle for learning', with personal/social development and possible accreditation/employment routes a potential outcome. This would, therefore, meet the objectives of the Youth Service, Schools/colleges, student support services, training bodies and employers.

- **Make a positive contribution:** motor based activities provide a great opportunity for young people to *Make a positive contribution*. The term can be interpreted widely, but may mean a contribution to community action, road safety, a reduction in petrol use, dealing with anti social behaviour and so on.

The process can engage young people in team work activities that involve meaningful decision making processes that are of benefit to themselves and their community. This links with the informal education agenda of empowerment and the employer's agenda of young people being 'employment ready' with the right Basic and Key Skills.

- **Achieve economic well-being:** access to reliable transport and knowing how to use it can motivate young people to engage in further education, employment and training. For some young people, having access to transport is an integral part of their employment (delivering fast food, courier work etc.) and the only way they fund their way through and get to and from further and higher education.

Being able to drive/ride is, therefore, a vocational skill and can be a major advantage for young people gaining and maintaining employment and hence their chances to *Achieve economic well-being*.