



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**

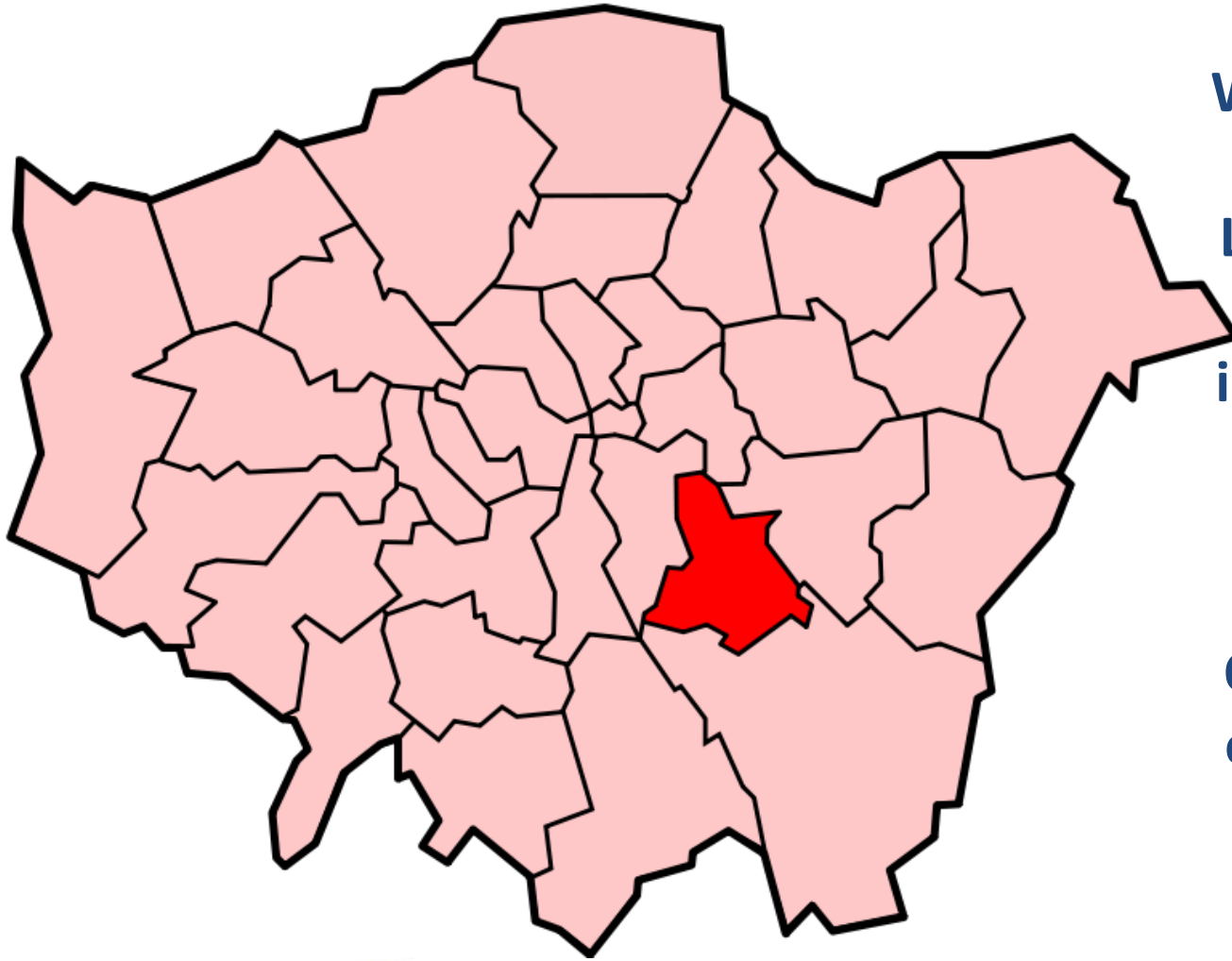


# **Lewisham Safer Transport Team 'SKITCHING – Skate Safe Campaign' London**



**Constable Sean Hathaway & Sergeant Crawford Buchanan**

# Lewisham Borough



With a land mass of  
35.15 km<sup>2</sup>,  
Lewisham Borough  
is a vibrant semi-  
inner city area with  
a diverse  
population of  
292,000 residents,  
Of which 0-19 year  
olds make up 25%.

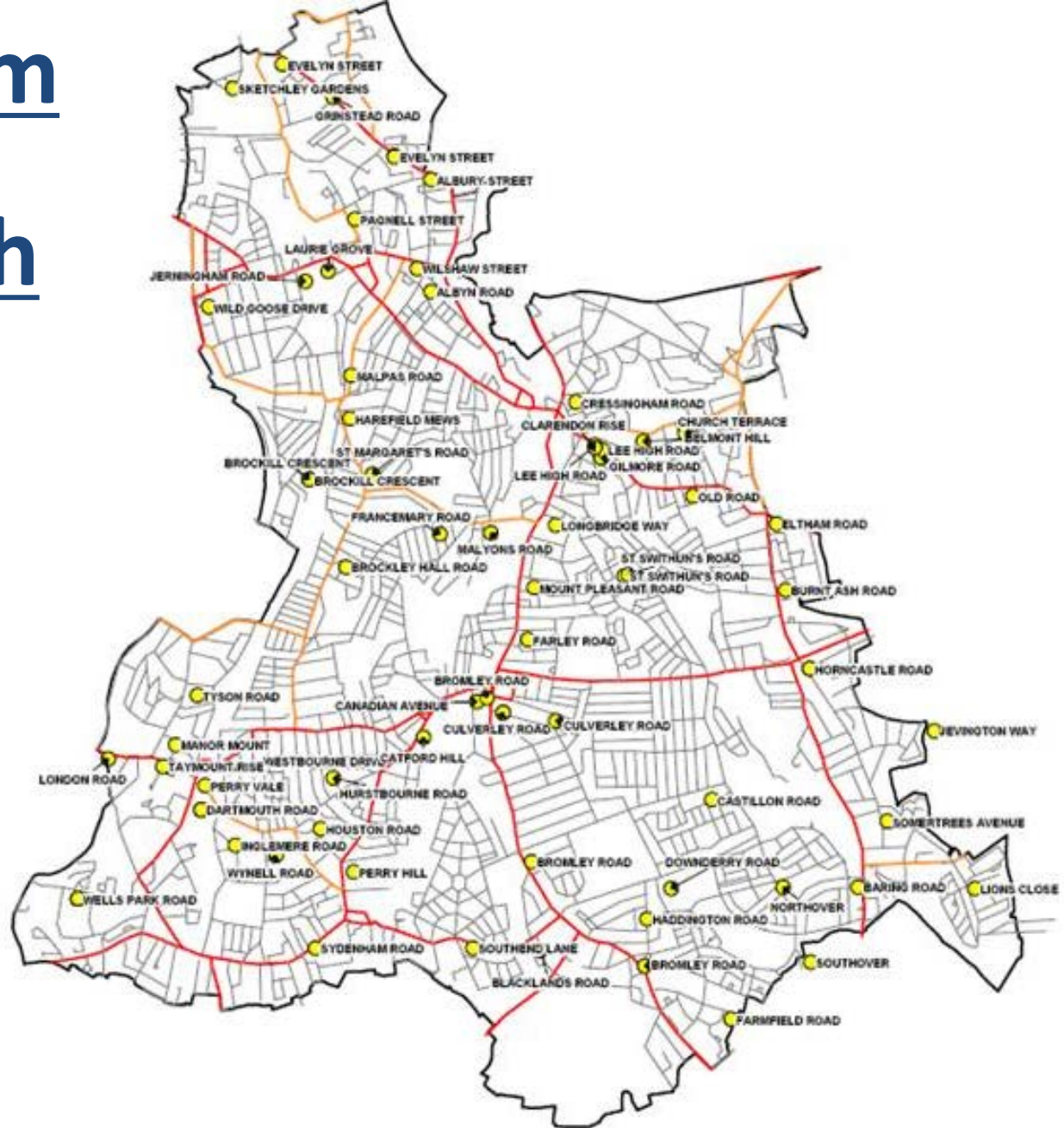


**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# Lewisham

# Borough



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



**Skitching** (abbreviated from "ski-hitching" or "skate-hitching", pron: \'skē-chiŋ\) is the act of hitching a ride by holding onto a motor vehicle while riding on a skateboard or roller skates.

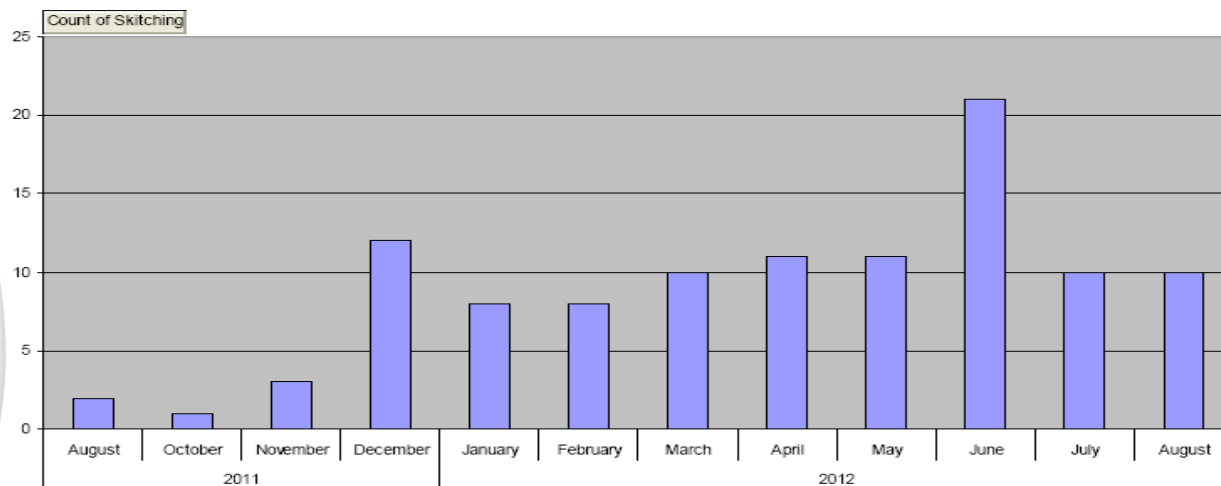
(Source: Wikipedia)



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# Scanning



The Problem: Youths on roller skates holding onto buses and other vehicles on busy roads

- High-risk activity disrupting traffic
- Potential for road traffic collisions, fatalities or serious injury
- Daily reports to police by concerned civilians and bus drivers



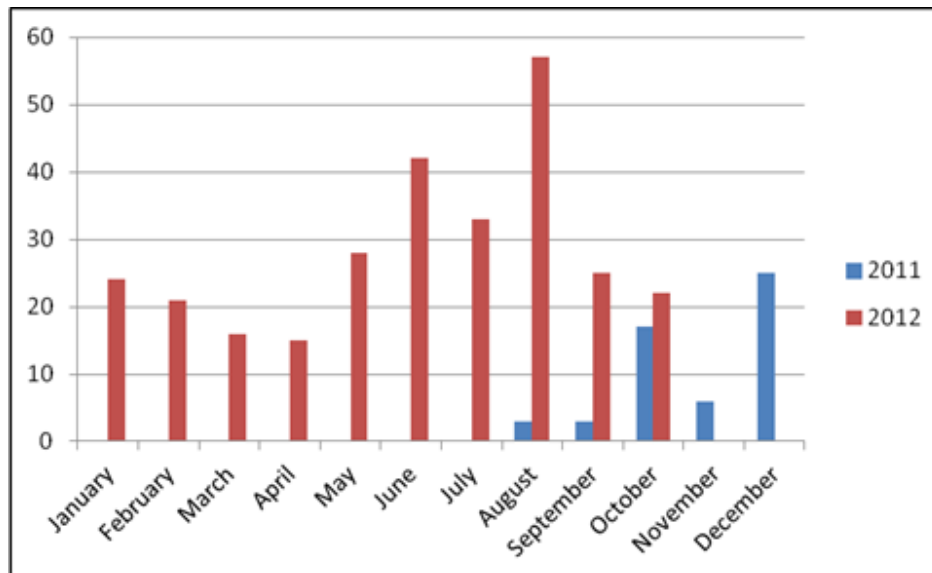
**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# Skitching Figures

Before August 2011, zero Skitching incidents reported in Lewisham Borough

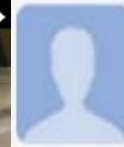
Month	2011	2012
January		24
February		21
March		16
April		15
May		28
June		42
July		33
August	3	57
September	3	25
October	17	22
November	6	11
December	25	15
Totals	54	309



- Efforts to reduce Skitching began May 2012
- Problem worsened during summer

(Data from calls to police and DIRs)

Silly boy!



Personal666ify



Subscribe

Silly boy!

0 likes 0 dislikes

24  
views

Uploaded 4 May 2012

Driving through catford and there this boy holding on the back of bus on rather dangerous road.

- Skitching grabbing online attention
- Some social-media commentators questioning police ability to deal with it

(Source: YouTube)



METROPOLITAN  
POLICE



# Analysis

Holding onto  
moving buses in  
the road

Roads used  
by London  
Buses

Bus design:  
grab points



Youths aged  
between 12 -  
18

Peak times  
between 1500  
-1900

Fun. Faster  
travel.

# Analysis

- Skaters wanted to ride bus home, but not allowed skates onboard
- Tuesday & Wednesday (1800 hrs), Saturday (1600 hrs) peak days and times
- Most skitchers in groups (varying sizes); ages 8 – 19
- Main motive: fun group experience



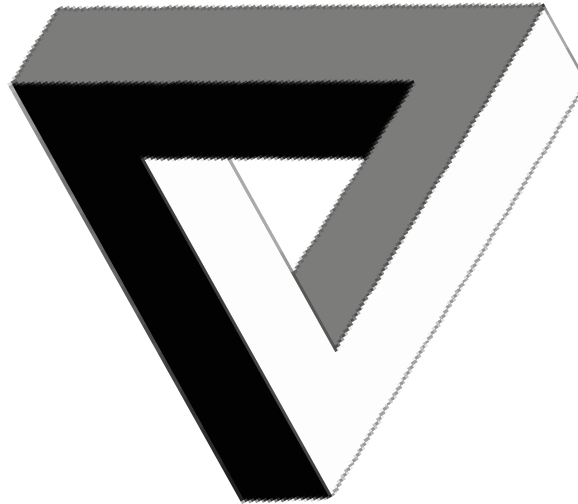
**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# Analysis

## Offender

- School age
- Quad skates
- No shoes
- Ignorance of dangers and law
- Thrill seekers



## Victim

- Bus passengers & operators suffering delays
- Injured skaters
- Injured/panicked road users

## Location

Bus Routes. No Police Policy. No Bus Operator Policy. Hand holds on buses.



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# Designing out the problem?

- Early consideration of removing hand holds on buses
- Cost of redesigning buses was prohibitive



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# Response Summary

1. New police procedure distributed
2. Educate bus drivers about their roles and responsibilities
3. Law enforcement
4. Information leaflets at popular skate shops
5. Skate Safe Campaign (Lewisham Council support)
6. Acceptable Behaviour Agreement to incentivise good behaviour
7. 'Doctor Skate' employed at Skate Safe

# Response – Policy

- Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Traffic Command existing policy around Skitchers. Problem was new to MPS, so we wrote a 'local direction', which was later adopted as MPS policy;

**"On seeing skaters 'skitching' – DO NOT initiate blue lights, sirens, or otherwise attempt to stop them or the vehicle they are being towed by. Wait for the vehicle to stop or for the skater to release themselves from the vehicle BEFORE you attempt to engage them".**  
***Any incident or Injury resulting from Police action WILL BE A POLICE-COLLISION!*** Proportionality is key, we do not want injuries or fatalities sustained because WE acted hastily. You may be asked to justify your actions!

# Response – 2. Bus Driver Education.

We held Bus driver educational events at garages and depots. Drivers were able to provide us with first hand experiences of Skitching activity which helped us create the following advice that all drivers were given;

**"If you see anyone\* being towed on your bus you MUST come to a slow and steady stop as soon as possible. You MUST immediately inform your garage, creating a Driver Incident Report. Physically check where necessary that the person holding onto your bus has let go and moved away BEFORE you move on and commence your journey. In the event of an accident, remain at the scene until the arrival of Police etc.**

**Failing to stop your bus in the knowledge that a person is 'holding on' is a road traffic offence. No Journey is so urgent as to ignore the danger!**

**\*Cyclist/Skateboarder/Roller Skater**



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# Response – 3. Law Enforcement.

In English Law (Section 26(1) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 to the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988) States that;

On **\*\*(..SPECIFY DATE..) at (..SPECIFY TOWNSHIP..)** without lawful authority or reasonable cause and for the purpose of being carried, took hold of  
(A) a motor vehicle, namely **(..SPECIFY VEHICLE MAKE AND INDEX NUMBER..)**  
(B) a trailer which was attached to a motor vehicle, namely **(..SPECIFY VEHICLE MAKE AND INDEX NUMBER..)**  
in motion on a road, namely **(..SPECIFY ROAD AND LOCATION..)** The penalty for such offence being a fine not exceeding £200.

We felt that using just the law would be counter productive. The energy spent on arresting and sending offenders to court would be better directed at looking to solve the problem without criminalising children.

# Response – 4. Leaflet/ Flyer Drops.

In addition to educating Police, Bus Drivers, and of course Skaters – we identified a need to somehow engage with the parents of Skitchers. Skate shop staff had told us during our scanning that Skate Sales were rapidly increasing.

Seeing the opportunity, we tried to engage with parents at Skate shops where the 'Bank of Mum and Dad' were buying Roller Skates. We did this by creating informative flyers about the dangers of skating – these were added to the boxes and bags in which skates were sold.

Maps showing where to find local Skate parks and hockey clubs were added to these flyers – Feedback from the Skate Shops was that this information was well received. With design help and funding from Lewisham Council we created this;



# LOOK!



More information:  
[www.b-involved.org.uk](http://www.b-involved.org.uk)

It is your responsibility to make sure you skate safely and know the law.

- Always check your skates before you start.
- Wear comfortable clothing.
- Use protective gear.
- Use reflectors, reflective clothing and lights.
- Carry footwear to change into when you have finished.
- Do not hold onto moving or stationary vehicles.
- Be careful of people around you.
- Use your common sense.

## SKATE SAFE

### Safety first

Before using your skates, you should check them for hazards, paying particular attention to the:

- wheels
- stopper
- bearings
- laces
- screws.

THESE SKATES ARE BOUND FOR GLORY THIS WAY

### Protect yourself

To improve your safety, you should wear:

- loose-fitting clothing
- a skate helmet
- knee and elbow pads
- wrist guards

You should also:

- make sure you are visible; use reflectors, reflective clothing and lights
- carry footwear to change into.

It's also good to have:

- a basic first aid kit
- a skate toolkit including T3 and/or 14mm spanners and a Phillips or cross-head screwdriver.

### Where it is illegal / not ok or safe to skate

- on the road
- on public transport
- in train stations
- in shopping centres
- in supermarkets and shops
- in crowded places
- on private property (without permission)

### Where it is legal and ok to skate

- in skate parks – see map overleaf for details
- at some youth projects – see map overleaf for details or check [www.b-involved.org.uk](http://www.b-involved.org.uk)
- in some public parks
- on the pavement.

# WHERE TO SKATE?

## SKATE SAFE

### SKATE PARKS

- A Beckenham Place Park  
Beckenham Hill Road BR3 5BP
- B Telegraph Hill Park  
Kilto Road/Pepe Road SE14 5TW
- C Ladywell Fields  
Ladywell Road SE13
- D Broadway Fields (Blue Square)  
Brookmill Road SE8 4HT
- E Folkestone Gardens  
Rox Street SE8 5NL



# Response – 5. Skate Safe.

Using a Safer Travel Initiative Grant (STIG) that we successfully applied for from Transport for London, we identified and hired a suitable local youth centre for a Skate Safe Workshop.

The Ladywell Youth Village was well known to skaters, being close to a skate park and the town centre.

The first Skate Safe Workshop was held on 16/02/2013 at the Ladywell Youth Village. 237 youths attended the event. They were each given educational advice on road safety awareness, the law, and skate maintenance. They were given wrist / ankle straps, bibs and combination tools for repairing skates and importantly a branded tote bag so they skate and carry their shoes for the bus ride home!



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# Skate Safe



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# SAFE SKATE EVENT

**FREE ENTRY**

**Prizes +  
giveaways  
Competitions**

**Refreshments**

**Workshops**

**Being safe**

**All  
Welcome**

**1- 4 pm**



**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

**At Ladywell Youth Village, 148 Dressington Avenue, Ladywell SE4 1JF**

This event is organised and supported by Youth Village, Lewisham Youth Service, Young Mayor for Lewisham, Lewisham Police Safer Transport Team, and Lewisham Community Safety Team.

For more details see [b-involved.org.uk](http://b-involved.org.uk) or contact Malcolm Ball



# Response – 6. ABC.

Transport for London (TfL) provide all children in under 18 years of age in Greater London with free or heavily discounted travel on Buses, Trains and Underground Rail travel via a ZIP Oyster Travel Card. This represents massive financial savings for millions of families. To promote good behaviour on the transport network this is Policed with a warning system called Earn Your Travel Back (EYTB). If a youth comes to the attention of TfL or the Police they can have their free travel privilege removed. TfL agreed that Skitching activity would warrant this action. Youths who were caught Skitching would therefore incur a financial burden upon their family – and so emphasis was placed upon parents to police poor behaviour from home. Subsequent proven good behaviour would earn the ZIP free travel back.

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) specific to Skitchers were drawn up, and where ZIP Card Free travel was removed, Skitchers were invited to sign up to an ABC. There were four such youths who entered into Skitching ABC's. Each one earnt their travel back, and two became Skate Safe Mentors who spoke at the Skate Safe workshop about how dangerous their behaviour had been.



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**



# Response – 7. 'Doctor Skate'.

Analysis of stops and other recorded encounters with skaters revealed that many of them had made dangerous modifications to their skates, such as removing the toe stop. Another common trend was to leave laces united – or to take them off altogether. Generally the condition of skates was poor and most were in need of a service.

Lewisham Council already had an established 'Dr Bike' scheme, where a mechanic was employed to attend Bicycle safety events and community rides and service needy bikes for free. 'Dr Bike' was provided with new tools and equipment purchased from the STIG budget – he quickly became 'Dr Skate'.

Every Skater attending the Skate safe workshop had their skates serviced.

# Assessment

The first and most impactful success that can be attributed to the Skate Safe Campaign is that no road users, pedestrians, or skaters have died, or have been seriously injured as the result of Skating activity in the carriageway in Lewisham Borough.

Between August (when the problem first emerged) and December 2011 there were 54 Driver Incident reports concerning Skitching.

We began to 'Problem solve' our response to Skitching in May 2011.

In 2012 there were 309 Driver Incident Reports concerning Skitching.

The Skate Safe Workshop was held in February 2013, the Driver Incident reports for 2013 totalled 41.

There have been no Driver Incident Reports in Lewisham for Skitching since.

Driver Incident Reports, provide an accurate reflection of Pan-Borough activity. These figures indicate that the problem was first dramatically reduced and not displaced to another part of the borough, or indeed, another surrounding London Borough – before disappearing altogether.

# Assessment

The Skate Safe Campaign is a sustainable answer to the problem of Skitching. It clearly did not made the problem worse - and exceeded our early reduction targets. From its beginnings, the Skitching Skate Safe Campaign was (very fortunately) conducted proactively, and not re-actively in the wake of a serious incident. We set out to keep it this way – with our #1 priority to prevent a fatality on our roads. 2012 saw London under the gaze of the world as we hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This did account for a restricted amount resources and funding that may have otherwise been available, however as our figures suggest we were successful regardless.

MONTH/ Yr	DIR's	MONTH/ Yr	DIR's	MONTH/ Yr	DIR's	MONTH/ Yr	DIR's
Jan-11		Jan-12	22	Jan-13	7	Jan-14	0
Feb-11		Feb-12	14	Feb-13	6	Feb-14	0
Mar-11		Mar-12	12	Mar-13	3	Mar-14	0
Apr-11		Apr-12	12	Apr-13	7	Apr-14	0
May-11		May-12	33	May-13	11	May-14	0
Jun-11		Jun-12	42	Jun-13	7	Jun-14	0
Jul-11		Jul-12	33	Jul-13	0	Jul-14	0
Aug-11	3	Aug-12	57	Aug-13	0	Aug-14	0
Sep-11	3	Sep-12	25	Sep-13	0	Sep-14	0
Oct-11	17	Oct-12	22	Oct-13	0	Oct-14	0
Nov-11	6	Nov-12	11	Nov-13	0	Nov-14	0
Dec-11	25	Dec-12	15	Dec-13	0	Dec-14	0





**Ladies and Gentlemen,  
I sincerely thank you  
for your time and  
welcome any  
questions you might  
have.**

