

# DfBB Women in Transport Podcast: Chief Constable Jo Shiner

**Jo Shiner is Chief Constable of Sussex, and is the roads policing lead on the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)**

**Anne-Marie:**

Welcome to the Driving for Better Business podcast celebrating women working in transport, fleet management, and road safety. Driving and riding for work presents one of the biggest risks that businesses need to address. Employers have a duty of care responsibility, and managing this risk requires employers to ensure the company must not do anything that puts their drivers or riders at risk and that the company's work-related driving activities must not endanger other road users. I'm delighted that Chief Constable Jo Shiner from Sussex Police is joining me today.

Chief Constable Shiner, a very warm welcome to the Driving for Better Business podcast. Your policing career has spanned nearly three decades of public service. What drew you to joining the police?

**CC Shiner:**

Truly it was to make a difference. I know a number of people say that, but it really was. Our family went through a really difficult experience when my father was killed when I was a teenager – on the roads – and I did talk about it to bring that lived experience to the roads policing portfolio. After that experience I knew I could probably make a difference and so policing was quite a natural choice for me.

**Anne-Marie:**

Thanks Jo. That's really interesting. A lot of our passionate ways of dealing with issues comes from experience. You've served in three forces, Norfolk, Kent and now Sussex which are all quite distinct. How important has collaboration and partnership been to keeping communities and people safe?

**CC Shiner:**

I'm a true believer that in order to make a difference we absolutely have to work together for the road policing strategy together because we all bring very different elements to that. Whether or not it's road furniture, enforcing speed, education – whatever it is about making our roads safer, unless we work in collaboration and partnership then actually it would be virtually impossible to make our communities – particularly our roads and everyone who uses them – which is virtually everybody – to keep them safe.

**Anne-Marie:**

Within the National Police Chiefs' Council, you currently hold the portfolio for Roads Policing. The value of roads policing is considerable and often underrated and unappreciated? How significant is the role in preventing harm?

**CC Shiner:**

It's really interesting that almost 6 people die on our roads in this country and yet there is not in my opinion a loud enough outcry around that. I find it completely unacceptable that there is that level of death, trauma and tragedy and all those families who live on without their loved one. Or those people have been significantly injured in those collisions and therefore their lives have changed forever - so this portfolio assists with trying to draw the attention to road policing, make sure it's more amplified in terms of when people are thinking about our wider communities and also appreciate the role that every single person has in making those roads safer and therefore reducing the number of people who are killed and seriously injured because everyone has a role in that. I'm a huge believer that people must take responsibility for their own actions – so either when they get behind the wheel of a vehicle, or a pedal cycle or a horse or when they are a pedestrian there is an incumbent responsibility to look after those people around us. To drive carefully, to keep an eye out when we are walking, to be road savvy when you're cycling. That personal responsibility sits on everybody who uses the roads and if we all respect that and take that a bit more seriously I do think we can make our roads safer and that's what we are trying to amplify within this portfolio.

**Anne-Marie:**

I absolutely agree, Jo from being involved in a life-threatening collision myself many years ago which was my route into road safety I can see the ripples of how it damages communities when just a single person is hurt or injured or killed on the road – and we can do more working together and taking that responsibility for ourselves.

I'd like to think about the traffic officers now that actually deal with the incidents. What has been your experience in Roads Policing from time spent in the specialism to how the welfare of officers who have witnessed or had to deal with serious incidents is managed?

**CC Shiner:**

I think welfare generally and I'll talk across policing but of course for every collision there are many more emergency services and people who are impacted by that. I think it has improved – do I think it's good enough yet? Probably not. There isn't level of appreciation of exactly what our emergency services and frontline workers see and experience when they go to those collisions – sometimes those scenes can be absolutely traumatic. Because we're seeing post covid a rise in the number of killed and seriously injured collisions, they are difficult to deal with, one of the main thrusts of our strategy is about making sure that we don't forget those people who have to deal with this day in day out. One of my other national roles is as the ambassador for Oscar Kilo 9 wellbeing dogs. That's a national policing charity all about wellbeing of our officers & front-line staff and other staff of course across policing. I'm really proud of what we have done around wellbeing dogs because that's one small way when there are people who have experienced this trauma at an incident we will try and

get wellbeing dogs to them very shortly after that because we know it actually helps to talk through what's happened and it's a real bonus of wellbeing, but we still have way to go with it

**Anne-Marie:**

All emergency services have to deal with traumatic events, and they are human beings, and they have the same feelings and concerns and have to deal with that after the event. The wellbeing dogs initiative sounds fantastic and I hope that gets expanded and if we can help in any way with this in Driving for Better Business please let us know as we'd be delighted to help with that.

**CC Shiner:**

It's been expanded so most forces now have them and just in Sussex we have 17 or 18 now so quite a number and they don't really cost us very much as they are people's pets, so it links beautifully with the roads policing portfolio. I think one of the most heated challenges in terms of the trauma particularly for roads policing and family liaison officers is the trauma it gives to the families and loved ones of those who have died. We talk about that 'knock on the door' but for those officers to do that to share with a family that their loved has passed away is in itself very traumatic – and so it it's important that we recognise exactly what we are asking them to do alongside those teams who absolutely meticulously and forensically in order to get the families the answers they deserve, then investigate those scenes in terms of the wider investigation so we can make sure the coroner but most importantly the loved ones have some idea as to why it happened.

**Anne-Marie:**

Thanks Jo.

With at least 1 in 3 injury collisions involves someone driving for work, employers have a critical role to play in the safety of drivers and riders. What do you see as the current trends in the factors in road collisions and how can business and organisations help to reduce the risk on the road?

**CC Shiner:**

Employers definitely have that critical role. It comes back to that sense of responsibility and of course the lawful duty they have so it's very important that corners are not cut, that vehicles their employees are using are safe, it's really important particularly for delivery drivers and that huge economy that grew during COVID that people are being tempted to break speed limits or to drive dangerously in order they can deliver their work that their bosses are asking them to do – so that responsibility of making sure that both from the vehicle side but also what we are asking those people on the roads to do has critical importance. Employees can really influence that, making sure those vehicles are safe and as up to date as they can be in terms of safety features, but what we also know which is a challenge because the reality is the cost of living is increasing and one of my urges at the moment is to urge people not to cut corners and not to save money when it comes to the safety of their vehicles. It is an obvious place that may happen but by doing that it could cost you much more money and it could cost someone their life.

**Anne-Marie:**

Absolutely Jo. Thinking about the more regulated parts of road users, the commercial vehicles, the HGVs - it's easy just to do what gets measured and I agree with your ethos about 'don't cut corners' so even if it's not being measured, if there's something you can do to improve your safety but it's not looked at or checked it's still important that you do it. Going back to the responsibility - we all have that responsibility as well as employers, the employees that drive the vehicle.

So, Police forces are also employers of drivers and riders. In terms of good management of work-related road risk, what are the good practice stories coming out from the police on this?

**CC Shiner:**

We also can have a significant influence in terms of training members of the public as well. There are schemes across the country - bike sense scheme and other awareness schemes which police forces use to great effect. In terms of our own driving, we ask our officers often to drive in quite difficult conditions and of course there is all the assessment and training that goes behind that but within the portfolio we are always looking at how we can make that training better. How we can equip those officers with improved skills to be able to work in that environment - often driving at speed through traffic to answer a 999 urgent call or to go after a vehicle with somebody who is wanted or have been involved in a crime so all for that professional practice, the assessment of how we use that and making sure that we are proportionate in terms of how we drive in emergency conditions I don't think has ever been more important, particularly related to confidence in policing.

All of that is bound up in the national roads policing strategy. We talked earlier about policing our roads together and it's intrinsically linked to that and preventing harm and saving lives and as important that we prevent harm by driving and making sure those risk assessments and training are good and solid, and officers understand their responsibilities. But we do have a duty to tackle crime so one of the spokes of that strategy is understanding what role roads and our officers and staff who use the roads have in tackling crime because there are very few criminals who don't use the roads.

That links with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties driving technology and innovation because there's technology that can be introduced to the vehicles and to emergency service vehicles and our own vehicles that we use privately because if we can design out those features which cause accidents or certainly don't prevent accidents then that's got to be something we should be driving hard to do.

Making sure we are using that innovation - and that also brings challenges. The most important thing linked to this is changing minds. We must change minds to change behaviours - if you want me to do something, then you'll need to persuade me why that's a good idea in the first place and therefore we need to change people's minds that it is not okay to drive at excess speed, not okay to drive while under the influence of drinks or drugs, it's not okay to not wear a seatbelt or to use your mobile phone while driving and it's not okay to drive antisocially on the roads - it comes back to that personal responsibility so we must continue to influence and change minds so they make the right decision behind the wheel.

**Anne-Marie:**

I've really enjoyed your insight today. The takeaway is actually it's a shared responsibility. We all have that responsibility to use the roads appropriately and safely, as well as those that use the roads for business, and as well as the highway authorities who have the responsibility to design, build and maintain the roads so we can use them safely

It's been a pleasure today, Jo. For more information on the charity that the NPCC is supporting with the welfare dogs please visit [Driving for Better Business](#) and for all other information about managing your work-related work risk.

Thank-you very much Jo.

Sussex Police

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/>

National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/>

OK9 – police dog welfare programme

<https://www.oscarkilo.org.uk/>