ROSPA URGES WILLIAM HAGUE TO CONSIDER TIME-ZONE DEVOLUTION

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Note to broadcasters: RoSPA has an ISDN studio.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has invited William Hague to include time-zone devolution in the constitutional changes he is overseeing in a bid to push for lighter evenings.

With the end of British Summer Time approaching, RoSPA's chief executive Tom Mullarkey has written to Mr Hague, who is chairing a new government committee looking at options for English devolution, asking him to include time zones in the review of devolution issues between the constituent countries of the United Kingdom.

RoSPA is urging that England and Scotland are able to make their own decisions on moving to a "Single/Double Summer Time" (SDST) system.

The safety charity has led calls for the UK to put the clocks one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) in winter and two hours ahead of GMT in summer, and has campaigned for decades to make lighter evenings a reality, on the grounds that more daylight on autumn/winter evenings would save lives and reduce injuries on the roads.

Tom Mullarkey, RoSPA chief executive, said: "We strongly believe that moving to Single/ Double Summer Time would save lives and reduce injuries and we will continue to lobby for change on this issue.

"At present, it is the perceived resistance in Scotland that is stalling the process, so we urge William Hague to seek time-zone change to reduce the number of lives being needlessly lost or diminished on the roads."

Research commissioned by the Department for Transport shows that about 80 deaths and at least 200 serious injuries would be prevented on the roads each year if the UK switched to Single/Double Summer Time.

And, according to a report by Dr Mayer Hillman, of the Policy Studies Institute at the University of Westminster, an extra hour of evening daylight would benefit Scotland more than any other part of the UK because of the limited number of daylight hours it enjoys in the winter - with parts of the country receiving as little light as some places in the Arctic Circle.

For Scottish children, there would be a yearly increase of about 200 daylight hours, with about half of these falling on school days.

Mr Mullarkey added: "Darker nights are upon us now so it is important that the campaign steps up a gear.

"Extra evening daylight would protect vulnerable road users like children, the elderly, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists by making them more visible to motorists during the peak time for road use in the late afternoon and early evening."

For more information on RoSPA's lighter evenings campaign, visit www.rospa.com/roadsafety/features/lighter-evenings.aspx

RoSPA's mission is to save lives and reduce injuries

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