

# A risky business



## TOUGHER JUSTICE

**Q1: What level of financial penalty do you think would be appropriate to deter drivers from committing risky traffic offences such as speeding, careless driving or using a mobile phone?**

Nearly eight in ten (78%) drivers favour fines of £200 or more for offences such as speeding, mobile phone use, or careless driving: double the current fixed penalty fine of £100. Nearly half (47%) think fines should be upped significantly, to £500 or more.

- 23% said £90
- 31% said £200
- 20% said £500
- 14% said £1,000
- 4% said £2,000
- 9% said more than £2,000

### LOST LIVES

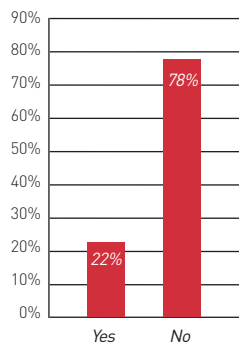
**Matthew Beardmore, 14**, was killed by an uninsured, unlicensed driver serving a six month ban for previous driving offences. The driver was fined £250 for driving uninsured, £100 for having defective tyres and £100 court costs. He was given a two year ban on top of the two six month bans he had already accrued. He was not prosecuted for killing Matthew.

**Q2: Most drivers who accrue 12 penalty points on their licence through committing driving offences face an automatic driving ban, but some are allowed to continue driving. Do you think it is right that some drivers who accrue 12 points should be let off a ban?**

The vast majority of drivers (78%) don't agree that someone should be allowed to continue driving if they rack up 12 points on their licence.

- 22% said yes
- 78% said no

Figure 1: Should drivers with 12 points be let off with a ban?

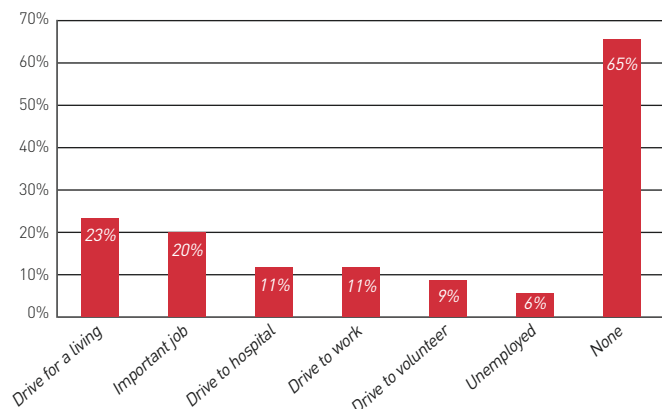


**Q3: Do you think any of the following are fair reasons for a driver to avoid a ban after committing enough driving offences to accrue 12 penalty points?**

A large majority (65%) don't think drivers who accrue 12 points should be allowed to continue driving for any of the reasons listed.

- 23% think driving for a living is a fair reason
- 20% think having a job with important responsibilities (such as a doctor, dentist or in the army) is a fair reason
- 11% think driving a relative to hospital appointments is a fair reason
- 11% think using their car to get to work is a fair reason
- 9% think driving as a volunteer for charity or community groups is a fair reason
- 6% think being unemployed and searching for work is a fair reason
- 65% think none of the above is a fair reason

Figure 2: Are the following fair reasons to avoid a ban after accruing 12 points?



### THE FACTS: HIGHER PENALTIES

International research shows tough penalties, alongside a high risk of being caught, help to reduce traffic offending.<sup>1</sup>

The Department for Transport has recently increased fixed penalty fines for endorsable driving offences from £60 to £100 (alongside three penalty points). Drivers can receive these fixed penalty fines for offences such as speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, careless driving or using a mobile phone.

When drivers tot up 12 points or more on their licence they are required to go to court and will normally receive a minimum six month driving ban. However, courts are able to use discretion to reduce or remove driving bans in cases where drivers successfully argue it will cause 'exceptional hardship'. There is no legal definition of exceptional hardship, but it can include a financial or social impact on the driver, or others around them.

In October 2011, Brake revealed data showing that more than 10,000 drivers in England and Wales were driving with 12 points or more on their licence.<sup>2</sup>

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**Q4: Do you think the government should run more road safety education campaigns on any of the following topics to improve driver awareness and encourage safer driving (such as those run through the Think! campaign)?**

**As well as supporting tougher penalties, most drivers think more government awareness campaigns are needed on key road safety topics like mobile phones and drink driving. Only a small minority (7%) don't think further campaigns are needed.**

- 72% think they should run more campaigns encouraging drivers to never use a mobile phone at the wheel, hand-held or hands-free
- 72% think they should run more campaigns encouraging drivers to not drink any alcohol before driving
- 63% think they should run more campaigns encouraging drivers to not drink alcohol if they are driving early the next morning
- 52% think they should run more campaigns encouraging drivers to slow down to 20mph around homes, shops and schools to protect people on foot or bike
- 49% think they should run more campaigns encouraging drivers to have their eyes tested at least every two years checks or straight away if they notice their sight deteriorating
- 43% think they should run more campaigns encouraging drivers to take rest breaks at least every two hours on long journeys
- 21% think they should run more campaigns on other road safety topics
- 7% think they shouldn't run more campaigns on road safety

## End notes

1. *Penalties in traffic, SWOV, 2009*
2. *Charity calls for reform to get law-breaking drivers off our roads, Brake, 2011*

