

Young drivers



TESTING AND TUITION

Q1: Do you think drivers should be required to gain a minimum level of experience before taking their driving test?

Unsurprisingly, young drivers are less in favour of a minimum requirement for driving experience than older drivers, but even among young drivers the vast majority support minimum requirements.

- 78% of young drivers think drivers should be required to gain a minimum level of experience before taking their driving test, compared to 90% of older drivers
- 17% of drivers do not think drivers should be required to gain a minimum level of experience before taking their driving test, compared to 10% of older drivers
- 4% of younger drivers did not answer, compared to 0% of older drivers

THE FACTS: CASUALTIES

- Young people age 15-24 are more likely to die in a preventable road crash than they are to die from any other cause¹.
- A young person is hurt every ten minutes on UK roads. Every hour-and-a-half, another young person suffers a serious injury, in many cases a life-changing injury such as brain damage, paralysis or loss of limbs. And every 18 hours a young person is killed in a road crash².
- Young drivers are also involved in a disproportionately high number of crashes that kill and injure road users of all ages. While young drivers aged 17-24 account for one in eight (12%) licence holders³, they are involved in one in four (24%) road deaths and serious injuries⁴.

Q2: Do you think there should be any restrictions on young drivers for a period of time (e.g. a year) after passing their test?

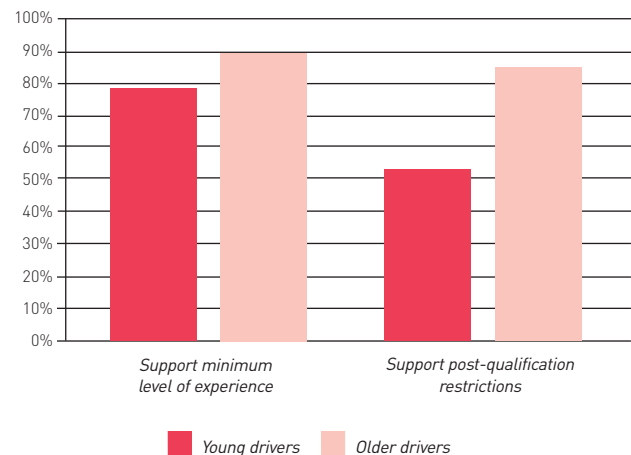
Young drivers are less likely to agree with restrictions than older drivers, but still the majority are in favour, showing many people recognise the heightened risks they are exposed to while they develop their experience.

- 54% of young drivers agreed there should be restrictions on young drivers for a period of time after passing their test, compared to 85% of older drivers
- 44% of young drivers do not think there should be restrictions on young drivers for a period of time after passing their test, compared to 13% of older drivers.
- 1% of young drivers did not answer, compared to 2% of older drivers

Of those young drivers who said yes...

- 51% said there should be a zero drink drive limit
- 36% said there should be a limit on engine size
- 33% said P plates should be mandatory
- 20% there should be a night time curfew
- 14% said there should be restrictions on young passengers

Figure 1: Drivers that support reform of system of learning to drive



THE FACTS: RISK

- An 18-year-old driver is more than three times as likely to be involved in a crash as a 48 year-old⁵ and one in five new drivers has a crash within six months of passing their test⁶.
- Drivers under 20 are five times as likely to be involved in a fatal crash if they are carrying two or more peers as passengers than when driving alone⁷.
- Young drivers have a higher proportion of crashes in the evenings and early mornings⁸.
- Young male drivers have much higher crash rates than young female drivers, and than their older counterparts. In the UK, young male drivers aged 17-20 are seven times more at risk than all male drivers, and between the hours of 2am and 5am their risk is 17 times higher⁹.



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CASE STUDY

Carolyn Smith, 22

In April 2009, Carolyn was a passenger in a car driven by 19 year old Aaron Ennis. He ignored her when she warned him he was driving too fast. He lost control on a bend and smashed into a dyke by the side of the road. He escaped the crash with whiplash and a black eye but Carolyn was not so lucky. Carolyn suffered injuries including a fractured spine, damage to her hips, badly bruised legs, and she bit a chunk out of her tongue on impact. Carolyn attended physiotherapy for a year after the crash while she learned to walk again, with the help of a walking stick. Six months on, Carolyn was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and has battled with depression since, resulting in a three week stay in a mental health unit in 2010.



Q3: Do you think all drivers should be required to re-take their test on a regular basis?

A significant minority of drivers want all drivers to be re-tested at least every ten years, and this proportion is only slightly lower among young drivers compared to older drivers.

- 37% of young drivers said drivers should be required to re-take their test at least every ten years, compared to 42% of older drivers
- 61% of young drivers said drivers should not be required to re-take their test on a regular basis, compared to 52% of older drivers
- 2% of young drivers did not answer, compared to 3% of older drivers

IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS...

- A greater proportion of drivers of all ages support restrictions on young drivers for a period after passing their test.
- More than half (54%) of young drivers support post-qualification restrictions in 2012, compared to four in 10 (43%) in 2007.
- 85% of older drivers support post-qualification restrictions, compared to 73% in 2007.

End notes

1. *Death registrations in England and Wales: Table 2 Deaths by age, sex and underlying cause, 2010 registrations, Office National Statistics, 2011*
2. *In 2010, 451 young people age 15 – 25 were killed on UK roads, 6,243 were badly hurt, some suffering life-changing injuries such as paralysis, brain damage or loss of limbs. A further 54,000 were slightly hurt. Figures provided by the Department for Transport and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.*
3. *Reported road accidents involving young car drivers: Great Britain 2009, DfT, 2011*
4. *Figures requested from the Department for Transport and the Police Service of Northern Ireland relating to 2010*
5. *The Schools Programme, Driving Standards Agency, 2000*
6. *Learning to Drive: a consultation paper, Driving Standards Agency, 2008*
7. *Situational risks of young drivers: the influence of passengers, time of day, and day of week on accident rates, Doherty, S.T.; Andrey, J.C.; and MacGregor, C, 1998*
8. *Novice driver accidents and the driving test, Transport Research Laboratory, 2001*
9. *Night-time Accidents, Centre for Transport Studies, University College London, 2005*

