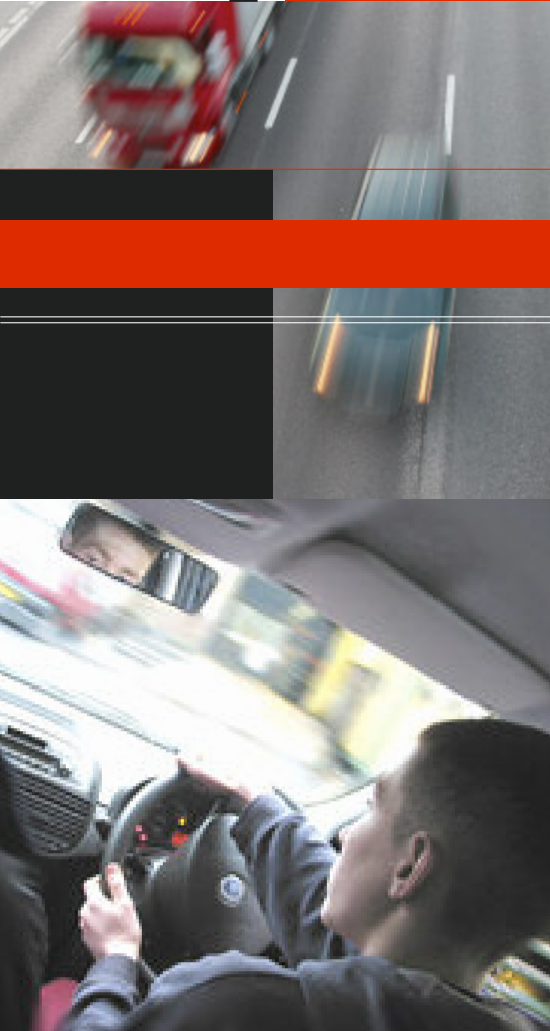


1

Direct Line & Brake Reports on Safe Driving 2013-2014 **REPORT ONE**

Are you ready to drive



Produced by:



Working in partnership with:



direct line





Julie Townsend, Brake's deputy chief executive, says:

“Brake is pleased to be publishing this report at a crucial moment for road safety policy in the UK, as the government considers reforms to the system of learning to drive. We cannot continue the status quo, with young and newly-qualified drivers facing and posing such high risks, too often killing and maiming themselves and others.

We are calling on the government to implement reform that ensures learner drivers gain as much experience as possible while limiting their exposure to the worst risks. It should learn from international experience of implementing graduated driver licensing (GDL), which has been shown to save lives. The results of this survey show a clear majority of drivers support the introduction of key elements of GDL, including a minimum learning period and post-test restrictions.

As well as demonstrating this support for change, this report exposes the ongoing need to help drivers of all ages and levels of experience to ensure they are ready to drive, every time. Many drivers are failing to take some very basic steps to help prevent crashes and reduce the chances of injury, sometimes due to complacency but often also due to widespread misunderstanding. Hence continuing to raise awareness about the vital importance of belting up, adjusting your head restraint properly, and maintaining your vehicle – empowering drivers to protect themselves and others – continues to be a major focus for Brake.”



About this report

This is the second in a series of reports on safe driving 2012-14 by Brake and Direct Line. It examines attitudes and behaviour in relation to distraction, stress, speed, drink, drugs, mobile phones and tiredness among at-work drivers.

The report is based on a survey of 1,000 drivers and riders carried out by research company Redshift on behalf of Brake, across the UK. For other reports in the series, visit www.driverpoll.com.

Are you ready to drive?



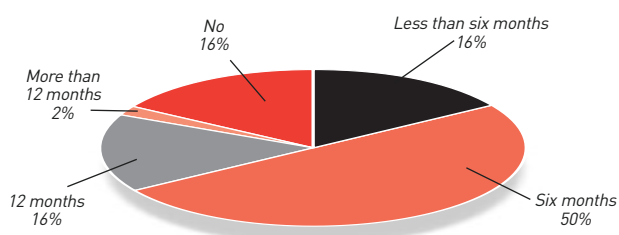
LEARNING TO DRIVE

Q1: Do you think learner drivers should be required to undertake a minimum period of learning to drive before taking their test?

The vast majority (84%) of drivers say we should have a minimum learning period before learner drivers can take their test.

- 16% said yes, less than six months
- 50% said yes, for six months
- 16% said yes, for 12 months
- 2% said yes, for more than 12 months
- 16% said no

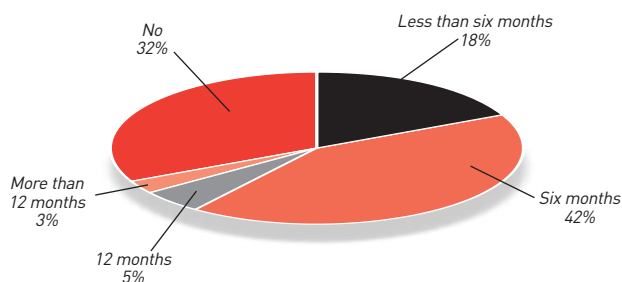
Figure 1: Should there be a minimum driver learning period?



Only a slightly smaller proportion of young drivers agreed with having a minimum learning period, with more than two thirds (69%) saying they are in favour.

- 18% said less than six months
- 42% said six months
- 5% said 12 months
- 3% said more than 12 months
- 32% said no

Figure 2: Do young drivers think there should be a minimum learning period?



Q2: Do you think learner drivers should be required to undertake minimum number of hours of supervised driving before taking their driving test?

Nine in ten (88%) felt there should be a minimum number of hours of tuition before drivers should be allowed to take their test, with nearly a quarter (23%) thinking that the minimum should be 50 hours.

- 37% said at least 25 hours
- 28% said at least 35 hours
- 23% said at least 50 hours
- 12% said no

ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: LEARNING TO DRIVE

For many young people, learning to drive can seem an exciting thing to do when you turn 17. But for some it doesn't turn out to be nearly as fun as they thought – road crashes are the biggest cause of death among young people.¹

If you're thinking of learning to drive, our advice is to delay as much as you can. The older you are, the less likely you are to crash.² You'll also save money and help protect environment. If you already drive, you need to be aware of the risks. Passing your test doesn't make you a good driver – it's just the start of learning a complicated skill, and driving unsupervised is a huge responsibility.

Research shows many young people, especially guys, enjoy the thrill of taking risks and over-estimate their ability to control a situation.³ When you're a new driver, you might feel like you're in charge of the vehicle, but if you take a risk like speeding, taking a corner fast or overtaking, you could easily lose control. And if you think you can handle driving on drink, drugs or while using your mobile, don't kid yourself: you're taking a massive chance with your own and other people's lives that could easily end in tragedy.

Q3: Do you think novice drivers should have to abide by any of the following requirements/restrictions for 12 months after passing their test?

Some licence restrictions for novice drivers were supported by the vast majority of respondents, including a zero-tolerance alcohol limit (70%) and a requirement to use 'P' plates (71%).

- A requirement to display 'P' plates, to show the driver is 'on probation'
 - 71% said yes
- Zero tolerance drink drive limit (so they are not allowed to drink any amount of alcohol before driving)
 - 70% said yes
- Maximum engine size
 - 57% said yes
- Revocation of licence if they break traffic laws during this period
 - 44% said yes
- Restrictions on carrying young passengers unless family members/dependants
 - 37% said yes
- Restrictions on driving very late at night (e.g. 12-4am), unless to work or education
 - 31% said yes

LOST LIVES

Sam Sayer, aged 20

was killed in a crash on 7 September 2005, driving on the A31 in Hampshire, just six months after passing his driving test. Six people died in the crash: Sam, his four passengers and the driver of the other car involved.

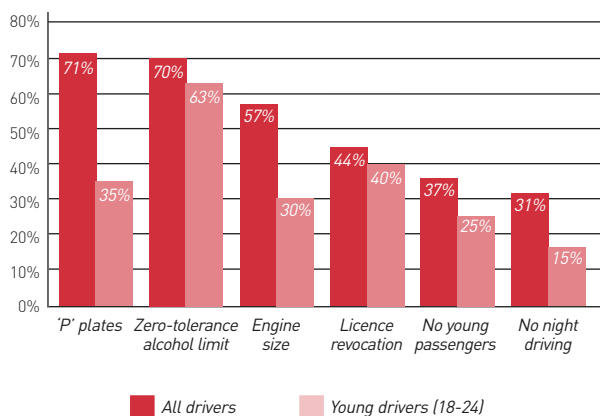
Are you ready to drive?



Young drivers (18-24) were less likely to support all of the restrictions, although a majority support a zero tolerance drink drive limit, and a significant minority support the other restrictions.

- a) A requirement to display 'P' plates, to show the driver is 'on probation'
 - 35% of young drivers said yes
- b) Zero tolerance drink drive limit (so they are not allowed to drink any amount of alcohol before driving)
 - 63% of young drivers said yes
- c) Maximum engine size
 - 30% of young drivers said yes
- d) Revocation of licence if they break traffic laws during this period
 - 40% of young drivers said yes
- e) Restrictions on carrying young passengers unless family members/dependants
 - 25% of young drivers said yes
- f) Restrictions on driving very late at night (e.g. 12-4am), unless to work or education
 - 15% of young drivers said yes

Figure 3: Do you think novice drivers should be subject to these limitations?



THE FACTS: YOUNG AND LEARNER DRIVERS

- Young drivers (age 17-24) are involved in crashes that result in one in five road deaths and serious injuries (20%) – 13 deaths and serious injuries every day⁴ – despite only making up one in eight (12%) licence holders.⁵
- People who start driving aged 27 are about 30% less likely to crash than people who start driving aged 17.
- One in five new drivers has a crash within six months of passing their test.
- The average 17-year-old who passes their driving test is more than 50% safer after one year and after two years is two-thirds less likely to crash.
- Most employers do not feel that newly-qualified drivers are sufficiently trained to drive for work.⁶
- Young drivers are more likely to crash because a combination of age and inexperience make them more likely to take risks on roads the younger they are, and less able to handle those risks because of a lack of experience.⁷

Q4: Should it be mandatory for novice drivers to take lessons on motorway driving and driving in difficult conditions such as at night or bad weather?

The vast majority agree with compulsory motorway and night time lessons.

- 90% said yes
- 10% said no
- 80% of young drivers (18-24) said yes
- 20% of young drivers said no

Q5: Do you think road safety should be taught in schools?

More than nine in ten (94%) think road safety should be taught in schools with nearly eight in ten (77%) thinking such education should be compulsory.

- 77% said it should be compulsory
- 17% said it should be voluntary
- 6% said no

Q6: Do you think public transport provides a decent alternative to driving for young people in your area?

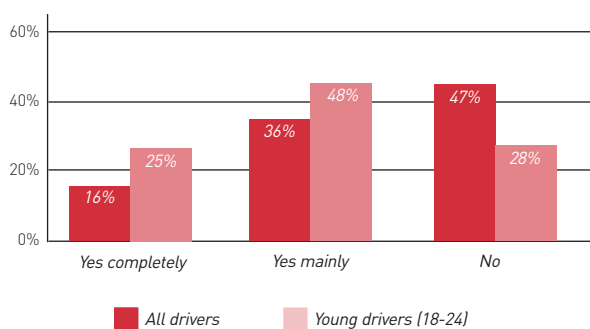
Nearly half (47%) of drivers think public transport is in such a bad state young people either have no choice but to drive, or are given no reason not to.

- 16% said yes completely – public transport provides a decent alternative to driving
- 36% said yes, mainly – but public transport could be improved to be a better alternative to driving
- 47% said no – public transport is not an alternative to driving

Young drivers (18-24) were more positive about public transport in their area, although a significant 28% said it is inadequate, and a further 48% said it should be improved.

- 25% of young drivers (18-24) said yes completely – public transport provides a decent alternative to driving
- 48% of young drivers said yes, mainly – but public transport could be improved to be a better alternative to driving
- 28% of young drivers said no – public transport is not an alternative to driving

Figure 4: Do you think public transport is a suitable alternative to driving in your area?



Are you ready to drive?



Q7: Do you think public transport in your area should be improved in the following ways to be more accessible and appealing for young people?

Nine in ten (92%) felt some improvements needed to be made to public transport, with seven in ten (71%) saying it needs to be cheaper.

- a) Cheaper
 - 71% said yes
- b) More frequent
 - 55% said yes
- c) More reliable
 - 43% said yes
- d) More secure
 - 27% said yes
- e) Cleaner
 - 16% said yes
- f) It doesn't need to be improved
 - 6% said yes
- g) I don't think it should be improved
 - 2% said yes

Young drivers agreed that affordability is the biggest improvement needed to public transport, and were more likely to think that frequency (63%) and reliability (53%) are key issues too.

- a) Cheaper
 - 73% said yes
- b) More frequent
 - 63% said yes
- c) More reliable
 - 53% said yes
- d) More secure
 - 20% said yes
- e) Cleaner
 - 20% said yes
- f) It doesn't need to be improved
 - 0% said yes
- g) I don't think it should be improved
 - 3% said yes

Q8: 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)?

Seven in ten (72%) drivers felt the government should run more road safety campaigns around mobile phone use and around drink driving. Fewer than one in ten (7%) felt no more campaigns were necessary.

- a) Encouraging drivers to never use a mobile phone at the wheel, hand-held or hands-free
 - 72% said yes
- b) Encouraging drivers to not drink any alcohol before driving
 - 72% said yes
- c) Encouraging drivers to not drink alcohol if they are driving early the next morning, when they may still be impaired
 - 63% said yes
- d) Encouraging drivers to slow down to 20mph around homes, shops and schools to protect people on foot or bike
 - 52% said yes
- e) Encouraging drivers to have their eyes tested at least every two years or straight away if they notice their sight deteriorating
 - 49% said yes
- f) Encouraging drivers to take rest breaks at least every two hours on long journeys
 - 43% said yes
- g) Other road safety topics
 - 21% said yes
- h) They shouldn't run more campaigns on road safety
 - 7% said yes

End notes

1. *Mortality Statistics 2011*, Office for National Statistics, 2012
2. *Cohort Study of learner and Novice Drivers: Part 3, Accidents, Offences and Driving Experience in the First Three Years of Driving*, TRL, 1995
3. *Young Driver Attitudes*, Department for Transport, 2001
4. *Reported road casualties Great Britain annual report 2011*, Department for Transport, 2012
5. *Reported road accidents involving young car drivers: Great Britain 2009*, DfT, 2011
6. *Learning to Drive: a consultation paper*, Driving Standards Agency, 2008
7. *Young novice drivers: Do they fail to feel the fear?*, Stradling, S. and Kinnear, N., 2007

