Direct Line & Brake Reports on Safe Driving 2009-2012 REPORT SIX

Young drivers

Produced by:
Brake
the road safety charity

Working in partnership with:
direct line
IN TRODUCTION

Julie Townsend Brake’s campaigns director, says:

“Violent, man-made road crashes are the biggest killer of young people. Every 18 hours a young person dies on UK roads and every hour and a half another is seriously injured, cutting short and devastating young lives.

Young people are often the victims of horrific crashes, but they are also often the perpetrators. Young drivers are involved in one in four crashes that kill and seriously injure road users of all ages, despite accounting for just one in eight licence holders.

Research shows it’s inexperience, coupled with the tendency of many young drivers to take risks, which means they are involved in so many serious crashes. This report reveals the extent of risk taking, showing that many of the deadliest behaviours are far more prevalent among young drivers. However, it also reveals that some key safety messages are getting through to young people: fewer are drink driving than in our 2007 survey, and more young drivers than older drivers understand that small amounts of alcohol affect driving.

But far more should be done to protect young drivers and those around them. Brake continues to call for a more staged approach to learning to drive: graduated driver licensing, with a minimum learning period and restrictions for novice drivers, enables new drivers to develop their experience while exposure to risky situations is limited. This approach is evidenced as effective in reducing casualties. It can also foster a safer driving culture by encouraging a greater respect for the huge responsibility of driving among those embarking on their driving career.”

Andy Goldby, Direct Line’s director of motor underwriting, says:

“The biggest killer of people between the ages of 17 and 24 in the UK is road crashes. Our Direct Line claims data suggests young drivers are five times more likely to make a claim than other drivers. With the most severe claims, this rises to 10 times as likely.

As a car insurer, Direct Line has first-hand knowledge of the damage caused by young drivers. This isn’t about repairable dents to a car, but avoidable deaths and serious injuries. Once a young person has passed their driving test, they are suddenly in control of a one tonne potentially lethal weapon travelling at speed.

Unfortunately, although our current driver testing regime verifies a level of competency, it does not provide experience or ‘real life’ situations such as having inebriated friends in your car distracting you, or even worse, encouraging you to go faster or take chances.

Driving should be a continuous journey of learning. Our roads are very different now to 10 years ago, laws have changed and vehicle power has increased. However, the attitudes of some young drivers have not changed. Even though deaths and injuries among young drivers have reduced in recent years, much of this can be attributed to safer vehicles rather than safer drivers.

Much needs to be done to reduce the tragedies we see on a daily basis. A review of the driving test, better education (even before driving lessons begin), graduated licences and the use of technology such as telematics to encourage safer driving, are just a few of the elements that need to be considered to stop the needless deaths and injuries on our roads.”

About this report

This report is divided into four parts, which will be published one at a time at www.driverpoll.com as results are released through the media.

This is the sixth in a series of reports on safe driving by Brake and Direct Line. It examines attitudes and behaviour of young drivers and riders in relation to drink and drug driving, speed, distractions, testing and enforcement.

The report is based on a survey of 4,640 drivers and riders, 390 of whom were aged 17 – 24. The survey was carried out by Brake volunteers, at locations across the UK. Every effort was made to ensure a wide variety of people responded. Repeating some questions from a 2006 survey by Brake and Green Flag has enabled some analysis of changing driver attitudes and behaviour.

Brake thanks volunteers who helped conduct the survey and collate results. For other reports in the series, visit www.driverpoll.com.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT

The government should:

- Implement a system of graduated driver licensing, allowing young and novice drivers to gain experience gradually, while being protected from the riskiest situations.
- This system should include a minimum learning period with a minimum number of hours of professional training, and a novice period with a zero tolerance drink drive limit, night-time driving curfew and ban on young passengers.
- Introduce compulsory road safety education as part of the national curriculum, ensuring a structured programme of learning which introduces the issues to children at a young age and which continues through secondary school with advice on staying safe as a driver and passenger.
- Launch year-round, hard-hitting and high-profile publicity campaigns targeting young drivers and passengers on key topics such as speed, overtaking, distractions and drink driving and drug driving.
- Make traffic policing a national policing priority, putting resources into higher levels of traffic policing, enabling an increase in roadside drink and drug testing and road patrols.

Read more at www.brake.org.uk/campaigns
DIRECT LINE & BRAKE REPORTS ON SAFE DRIVING 2009-12 REPORT SIX

Section 1

YOUNG DRIVERS

DRINK DRIVING

Q1: Within the past 12 months, how often have you driven after drinking alcohol?

Young people are less willing to get behind the wheel after drinking alcohol than older drivers, but still a shocking three in 10 young drivers are willing to take this potentially deadly gamble.

- 29% of drivers aged 17 – 24 drive after drinking alcohol, compared to 36% of older drivers
- 4% of young drivers do this at least once a month, compared to 6% of older drivers
- 69% of young drivers do not drive after drinking alcohol, compared to 64% of older drivers

THE FACTS: ALCOHOL

In 2010, 15% of road deaths and 5% of all road casualties occurred when someone was over the drink drive limit. Many more drink-drive crashes are caused by drivers who only have small amounts of alcohol in their blood. A further estimated 65 road deaths per year are caused by drivers who are under the drink-drive limit, but who have a significant amount of alcohol in their blood. Research shows that even very small amounts of alcohol significantly increase reaction times and therefore your risk of crashing.

Young drivers are twice as likely to be recorded as impaired by alcohol after crashing than older drivers and they have more drink drive crashes per licence holder or per mile travelled than any other age group.

Steven Negus, 16, from Lancing, West Sussex, died on 25 September 1984. He was cycling home from his girlfriend's house at 11pm, when he was struck from behind by a young driver who had been drinking alcohol. Steven was thrown from his bike and landed on the pavement. Steven never regained consciousness.

Q2: Within the past 12 months, how often have you driven first thing in the morning after drinking a lot of alcohol the night before?

While young drivers are less likely to drive straight after drinking alcohol than older drivers, they are much more likely to drive the morning after a heavy night.

- 53% of young drivers said they drive first thing in the morning after drinking a lot the night before, compared to 36% of older drivers
- 6% of young drivers do this at least monthly, compared to 5% of older drivers
- 46% of young drivers said they never drive first thing in the morning after drinking the night before, compared to 63% of older drivers

Q3: What is the minimum amount of alcohol that you think affects your driving?

Young drivers are more aware that even small amounts of alcohol affect driving, with significantly more answering correctly that even one small drink affects their ability to drive safely. However, a significant proportion – one in eight – wrongly believe they can get away with three or more.

- 62% of young drivers correctly said one small glass of wine, half a pint of beer or one shot of spirits, compared to 51% of older drivers
- 25% of young drivers said two small glasses of wine, a pint of beer or two shots of spirits, compared to 32% of older drivers
- 12% of young people said three or more small glasses of wine, a pint and a half of beer or more, or three shots of spirits, compared to 14% of older drivers

Ashley Brixey, 20, was killed in October 2004, by a young drunk and drugged driver coming back from a night out with friends. The driver lost control on a bend, and the car went through a garden fence and landed upside down in a swimming pool. Ashley was knocked unconscious and drowned.

LOST LIVES

IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS...

More young drivers are committing to not driving after drinking any amount of alcohol (69% compared to 55% four years ago), but more are admitting to driving first thing the morning after drinking (53% compared to 45% four years ago)

End notes

1. Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2010 annual report, Department for Transport, 2011
2. Reducing the BAC limit to 50mg – what can we expect to gain?, Professor Richard E Allsop, Centre for Transport Studies University College London (FACTS, 2005)
3. The relationship between serious injury and blood alcohol concentration (BAC) in fatal motor vehicle accidents: BAC = 0.01% is associated with significantly more dangerous accidents than BAC = 0.00%, University of California at San Diego, 2011
4. Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2010 annual report, Department for Transport, 2011
DRUGS

THE FACTS: DRUGS

Drug driving is a widespread menace on our roads. In the UK, around 18% of people killed in road crashes have traces of illegal drugs in their blood, with cannabis being the most common.

Different drugs affect people in different ways and the effects can last for days, sometimes without someone realising. Researchers at the University Claude Bernard in Lyon, France, found taking cannabis almost doubles the risk of being involved in a fatal car crash while mixing cannabis with alcohol increased crash risk 16-fold. Research into drivers who take cocaine reveal it reduces driving ability, increases recklessness and increases the likelihood of being involved in a fatal crash. Drivers who take MDMA are less able to keep to their lane or regulate speed and its negative effects may last for considerable time after use.

Q4: In the past 12 months, have you driven after taking illegal drugs?

Drivers under 25 are nearly four times as likely to drive on illegal drugs as their older counterparts, with a shocking one in nine saying they have done this in the past year.

- 11% of young drivers said they drive on illegal drugs compared to 3% of older drivers
- 3% of young drivers said they do this monthly or more compared to less than 1% of older drivers
- 89% of young drivers do not drive on illegal drugs, compared with 95% of older drivers

Figure 1: Do you drive on illegal drugs?

IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS...

- Slightly more young drivers admit to driving on illegal drugs now compared to four years ago - 11% compared to 9% in 2007

LOST LIVES

It took seven days for George Fisher, 24, to die after he was hit by Mark Featherstone, who was found to have cannabis in his system. On 23 February 2001, George finished work for the day and went home to eat with his family. He was a web designer by profession, and an avid kick boxer. Later that evening he joined his friend for a drink at the local pub. At 11.45pm he left to walk to the bus station, but he didn’t make it there. A car came speeding through a red light and hit George as he stepped onto the pavement. George was tossed into the air, his head hit the windscreen, and he was hurled into a concrete wall. Surgeons operated to try to save his life but he went into a coma. His spine was broken in five places and he had a massive blood clot on the left side of his brain. A decision was taken to switch off his life support on 1 March 2001.

End notes

1. The incidence of drugs and alcohol in road accident fatalities, Transport Research Laboratory, 2000
2. Cannabis intoxication and fatal road crashes in France: population based case-control study, French National Institute for Transport and Safety Research, 2005
4. The role of cocaine in fatal crashes: first results of the Québec drug study, Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine, 2001
5. MDMA and alcohol effects, combined and alone, on objective and subjective measures of actual driving performance and psychomotor function, Maastricht University, 2006
6. 3,4-Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDMA, ecstasy) and driving impairment, Washington State Toxicology Laboratory, 2001
Young drivers

**SPEED**

**THE FACTS: RISK TAKING**
- Age and inexperience combine to dramatically increase young drivers’ risk of crashing. Not only are young drivers more likely to take risks, such as speeding, because of their youth, they are less able to cope with those risks because of their inexperience.
- The tendency of many young people to take risks is linked to brain development. The part of the brain that controls impulses, the frontal lobe, is not fully developed until most people’s mid-20s.

**Q1: Within the past 12 months, how often have you driven at 35mph or faster in a 30mph zone?**

Young drivers are more likely to break urban speed limits than older drivers, and are far more likely to do it regularly, suggesting risky driving is more ingrained in their day to day driving habits. Half of young drivers (52%) do this weekly or more, compared to a third (34%) of older drivers.

- 80% of young drivers have driven at 35mph or faster in a 30mph zone in the past year, compared to 71% of older drivers
- 6% of young drivers do this daily, compared to 6% of older drivers
- 28% do this several times a week, compared to 13% of older drivers
- 18% do this about once a week, compared to 15% of older drivers
- 11% do this about once a month, compared to 13% of older drivers
- 17% do this than once a month, compared to 24% of older drivers
- 18% of young drivers have not driven at 35mph or faster in a 30mph zone in the past year, compared to 29% of older drivers

**ADVICE:**

**SPEED IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES**

The speed limit around schools, shops and houses is usually 30mph (the default in urban areas), and it’s vital to always ensure you’re well within the legal limit. But even staying just under 30mph is too fast for the safety of people on foot and bicycles, particularly children and the elderly. That’s because your stopping distance at 30mph is 23m, or six car lengths: nearly double that of driving at 20mph. Driving at 20mph or slower gives you time to react and stop in an emergency. At 20mph, if a child steps into the road three car lengths ahead, you should just about be able to stop in time. But at 30mph, you’ll barely have time to hit the brakes. You’ll hit the child at about 27mph, with a significant chance of seriously maiming or killing them. Children make mistakes but they don’t deserve the death penalty.

**Q2: Within the past 12 months, how often have you driven above 60mph on a rural road (not dual carriageway or motorway)?**

Young drivers are only slightly more likely than older drivers to drive above 60mph on rural roads, but the majority own up to this highly risky behaviour, and they are more likely than older drivers to do it frequently. 26% of young drivers do this weekly or more, compared to 19% of older drivers.

- 54% of young drivers have driven above 60mph on a rural road in the past year, compared to 51% of older drivers
- 4% of young drivers do this daily, compared to 3% of older drivers
- 9% of young drivers do this several times a week, compared to 7% of older drivers
- 13% of young drivers do this about once a week, compared to 9% of older drivers
- 11% of young drivers do this about once a month, compared to 11% of older drivers
- 16% do this less than once a month, compared to 20% of older drivers
- 46% of young drivers have not driven above 60mph on a rural road in the past year, compared to 48% of older drivers

**ADVICE:**

**RURAL ROADS**

Country roads often have speed limits that are far too high, dangerous sharp bends, and unexpected hazards. However well you know the road, you never know when a cyclist, horse rider or jogger will be round the corner or over the next brow, so bear this in mind and slow right down for bends or in poor weather, or whenever you can’t see much of the road ahead. When passing people on foot, bikes and horses, slow right down and give them plenty of space. Never risk overtaking unless it’s absolutely essential, such as overtaking a very slow moving vehicle such as a tractor, and ensure the road is clear and straight, and you won’t have to drive at excessive speeds or above the limit to do it. Otherwise, just hang back from the vehicle in front and enjoy the journey.
Young drivers

Q3: How often have you overtaken when there was a chance you could have hit something you couldn’t see?

Overtaking is one of the most dangerous manoeuvres you can perform, and doing so when you can’t see what’s coming can be lethal. Yet a horrifying one in seven young drivers admit doing this, taking enormous risks with their lives, the lives of their passengers and other road users.

- 15% of young drivers have overtaken blind, compared to 11% of older drivers
- 5% of young drivers overtake blind monthly or more, compared to 5% of older drivers
- 11% of young drivers overtake blind less than once a month, compared to 7% of older drivers
- 84% of younger drivers never overtake blind, compared to 88% of older drivers

CASE STUDY

Nick Bennett, seriously injured age 18

Nick had recently passed his driving test when he tried to overtake two cars at once. He thought he could speed past them and get back in lane before the three ton truck coming the other way would reach him. He judged it wrong and suffered horrendous injuries in the crash. His brain stem was severely twisted, which affects his mobility, speech and nervous system. He has to use a wheelchair to get around and needs help with everyday tasks like getting dressed and preparing meals. Nick volunteers for Brake, warning other drivers about the dangers of taking risks behind the wheel.

Q4: Within the past 12 months, how often have you driven at 80mph or faster on a 70mph motorway or dual carriageway?

As with other types of roads, on motorways young drivers are more likely to speed than older drivers, and less equipped to handle this risk taking. A deeply worrying two-thirds take the risk of driving at 80mph or faster, and many do so weekly.

- 65% of young drivers have driven at 80mph or faster on a motorway or dual carriageway, compared to 61% of older drivers
- 1% of young drivers do this daily or more, compared to 5% of older drivers
- 15% of young drivers do this several times a week, compared to 10% of older drivers
- 11% of young drivers do this about once a week, compared to 8% of older drivers
- 16% of young drivers do this about once a month, compared to 15% of older drivers
- 22% of young drivers do this less than once a month, compared to 24% of older drivers
- 35% of young drivers have not driven at 80mph or faster on a motorway or dual carriageway in the past year, compared to 37% of older drivers

Q5: Within the past 12 months, on motorways, how often have you left less than a two-second gap between your vehicle and the one vehicle in front?

The gap drivers leave behind the vehicle in front is their braking space in an emergency, such as if a child suddenly steps out.

- 56% of young drivers have not left a two-second gap on motorways sometime in the past year, compared to 53% of older drivers
- 4% of young drivers did this daily or more, compared to 7% of older drivers
- 13% of young drivers did this several times a week, compared to 7% of older drivers
- 13% of young drivers did this about once a week, compared to 7% of older drivers
- 9% of young drivers did this about once a month, compared to 12% of older drivers
- 17% of young drivers did this less than once a month, compared to 20% of older drivers
- 39% of young drivers always left a two-second gap on motorways in the past year, compared to 45% of older drivers

THE FACTS: RISKS ON DIFFERENT ROADS

- About four in 10 fatal crashes in the UK happen on roads with a 20, 30 or 40mph limit. Many of the victims are vulnerable road users: crashes on urban roads are more than twice as likely to involve pedestrians as crashes on rural roads. Slower speeds on urban roads help protect vulnerable road users by giving drivers a far greater chance of stopping in time in an emergency.
- 44% of fatal crashes happen on roads with a 50 or 60mph limit. Drivers are far more likely to die on rural roads than any other type of road. Many of these crashes are linked to speed, involving taking corners too fast, losing control in bad weather, or overtaking.
- 16% of fatal crashes happen on motorways or dual carriageways with a 70mph limit. While there are fewer crashes on these roads, they are more likely to involve deaths and serious injuries because of the high speeds involved. Crashes on motorways are also more likely to involve three or more vehicles, resulting in more people being hurt.

Figure 2: Drivers who have broken speed limits
**ADVICE: MOTORWAY DRIVING**
Always keep at least two seconds from the vehicle in front, four in wet weather and ten or more in icy conditions. This is your braking space in a crisis, and vital if you come across an unexpected hazard like queuing traffic. Change lanes only when necessary and as little as possible, checking around you carefully to ensure you have space. Never undertake except in slow-moving queues.

Always stay well within the limit – including temporary limits in bad weather, congestion and around road works – and slow right down if visibility is poor. Don’t underestimate the difference speed makes to your safety on motorways: at 80mph, your stopping distance is 27% more than at 70mph, meaning you need six car lengths more to come a complete stop, which could easily be the difference between life and death.

**IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS...**
Young drivers are taking fewer risks on the road by speeding or overtaking blind than five years ago, suggesting the message is getting through to many young people about the consequences of these behaviours:

- In 2012, 52% of young drivers admit to driving 35mph or more in a 30mph zone weekly or more, compared to 60% in 2007.
- In 2012, 26% of young drivers admit driving above 60mph on rural roads compared to 40% in 2007.
- In 2012, 15% of young drivers admitted to overtaking blind compared to 33% in 2007.

**End notes**
1. The accident liability of car drivers, Maycock, Lockwood & Lester, 1991
3. Immaturity is an important factor in risk taking by young drivers due to gradual development of the frontal lobe in adolescence, SWOV, 2009 at Cranfield University's Driver Behaviour and Training, Amsterdam Conference, 2009, Amsterdam.
4. Reported road casualties 2010 annual report, Department for Transport, 2011
5. Reported road casualties 2010 annual report, Department for Transport, 2011
Young drivers

MOBILE PHONES

Q1: Within the past 12 months, have you driven while sending or reading a text message?

Four in ten young drivers (44%) drive while texting, despite the enormous risk to themselves and other road users. This is a far higher proportion than among older drivers, and many young drivers are distracting themselves in this way weekly or more.

- 44% of drivers age 17-24 have driven while sending or reading a text message, compared to 26% of older drivers
- 12% of young drivers do this weekly or more, compared to 8% of older drivers
- 56% of younger drivers have not driven while sending or reading a text, compared to 73% of older drivers

Q2: Within the past 12 months, have you driven while using the internet or an app on your phone, for example emailing or checking updates on a social networking site (excluding using it as a sat-nav)?

Young drivers are three times as likely to use the internet or an app when driving as an older driver. More than two-thirds of young drivers who go online at the wheel do it every week or more.

- 21% of young drivers have driven while using the internet or an app on their phone, compared to 7% of older drivers
- 8% of young drivers do this weekly or more, compared to 3% of older drivers
- 79% of young drivers do not go online or use apps at the wheel, compared to 91% of older drivers

Q3: Within the past 12 months, have you driven while talking on a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone?

Just over half of young drivers talk on their phone at the wheel – about the same as among older drivers – but younger drivers are more likely to break the law by using a hand-held phone.

- 52% of young drivers have driven while talking on a mobile phone, compared to 48% of older drivers
- 41% of young drivers have driven while talking on a hand-held phone, compared to 30% of older drivers
- 11% of young drivers have driven while talking on a phone, but only when using a hands-free kit, compared to 18% of older drivers

THE FACTS: TEXTING AND SMARTPHONES

Texting and using a phone for emailing or going online distracts from driving cognitively, physically and visually. In the United States, death from distracted driving has been increasing and researchers put this down to increases in drivers using smart technology. In the UK more than a quarter of adults and nearly half of teenagers own a smartphone and the volume of mobile data transferred over the UK’s mobile networks has increased forty-fold between 2007 and 2010.

Research into the impact of sending or receiving text messages in young drivers found the amount of time drivers spent with their eyes off the road increased by up to 400%. Drivers made 28% more lane excursions and 140% more incorrect lane changes. Research using a driver simulator to explore risks drivers face when using phones for emailing found a heightened crash risk. In a large-scale study of commercial drivers, which monitored the impact of them texting at the wheel, their crash risk increased to 23 times that of a driver paying full attention.

Figure 1: Drivers who text, go online or use apps at the wheel

Figure 2: Drivers who use a mobile phone
**ADVICE: PUT YOUR PHONE AWAY**

Communications technology is developing at a startling rate and many of us are used to being connected 24/7 via social networking through mobile networks. Increasingly, mobiles act as phone, sat-nav, music player and social media provider all wrapped up in one.

But however much you love your phone, when you are driving you need to put it away. Texting, tweeting, emailing, taking or making a call, inputting details into a GPS application, tapping the screen, repeatedly glancing at or watching the screen: all are major distractions that put your life and the lives of others at risk. Driving is the most dangerous and complex activity most of us do on a daily basis and it requires your full concentration. Your phone can wait.

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**THE FACTS: TALKING ON A MOBILE PHONE**

Some drivers are still unaware that talking on a phone is distracting from driving even on a hands-free kit, believing it is the holding of the phone that poses the danger. Research indicates it is the call itself that is the main distraction. Tests have found drivers on hands-free mobile phones take 20% longer to brake when needed. Whether or not the driver is using a hands-free kit, talking on a mobile phone has been found to increase the risk of crashing four-fold. Their crash risk remains higher than normal for up to 10 minutes after the call has ended. In tests, it has been found that driving is impaired more during a phone conversation than by having a blood alcohol level at the current UK limit (80mg/100ml blood).
**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 cause.1
- 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 crash.2
- 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 holders, they are involved in one in four (24%) road deaths and serious injuries.3

**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

**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-old and one in five new drivers has a crash within six months of passing their test.5
- 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 alone.6
- Young drivers have a higher proportion of crashes in the evenings and early mornings.7
- 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 higher.8
Young drivers

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, 4,243 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.
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
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