

# Making Northern Ireland's roads safer

## Let us know what you think



EasyRead version of  
Consultation on Proposed Changes to the  
Learning and Restricted Driver Schemes and on  
Graduated Driver Licensing  
Executive Summary



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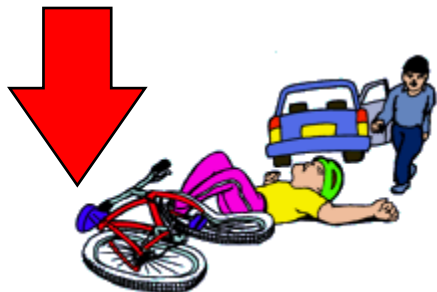


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# A message from the Department

## Let's make Northern Ireland's roads the safest in the world!



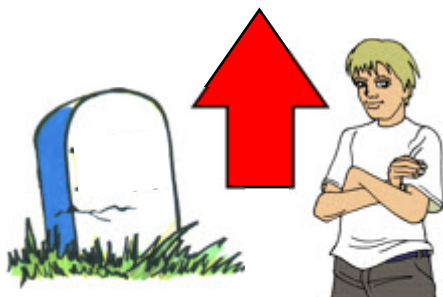
The Department of the Environment wants to cut the number of people killed and injured on our roads.



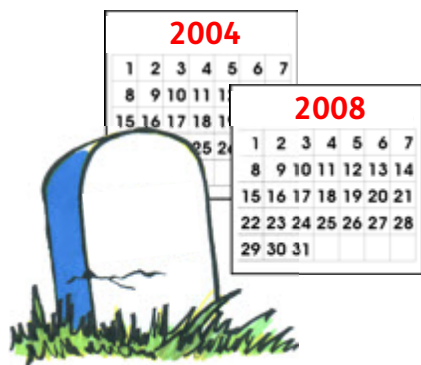
One of our big worries is how many young and other new drivers have road crashes.



1 in every 5 new drivers has a crash in their first 6 months of driving.



Young car drivers are twice as likely as other drivers to cause a crash when someone is killed or seriously hurt.

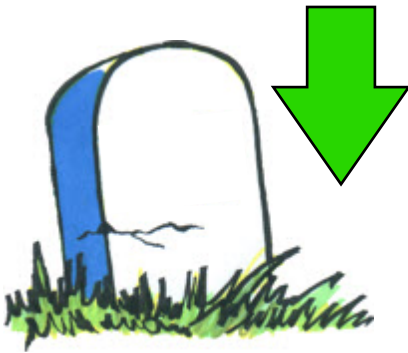


Between 2004 and 2008 young drivers caused 1 in every 4 road deaths in Northern Ireland.



And they caused 1 in every 5 of all serious road injuries.

We must do something about this.



We want to cut the number of young people killed or seriously hurt on our roads by more than half.

To do this we must make training and testing better.



Learning to drive and taking the driving test must be about more than just controlling a car.



It must also be about learning how to keep themselves and other road users safe on the roads.



We also need to do more to help new drivers learn and get better in a safe way.



In this booklet we set out some ideas for making all that happen.



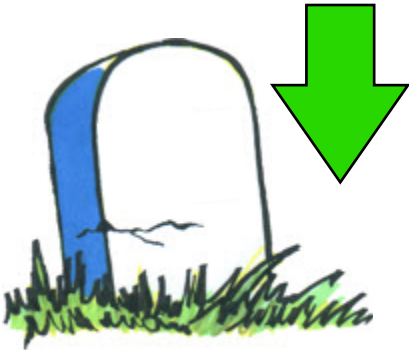
We want to hear which you think will work. Or tell us your own ideas.



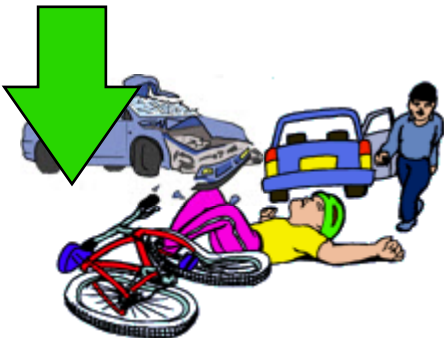
By 2020 we want to make a journey on Northern Ireland's roads the safest in the world.

We look forward to hearing your views.  
**Department of the Environment**

# Making Northern Ireland's roads safer



By the year 2020 we want to cut the number of people killed in road crashes by more than half.



We want to cut the number of people seriously hurt on our roads by just under half.



We also want to cut the number of children and young people killed, or badly hurt, by more than half.



We are unhappy about the high number of new drivers who have road crashes.



By 'new' drivers we mean car drivers of all ages, who have been driving for less than 2 years since they passed their driving test. Most of these new drivers are also young drivers.

**12 Months**

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |    |



## The Restricted (R) driver scheme

Since 1968 new drivers in Northern Ireland have had to carry an R plate for 12 months after passing their test.



They must also not drive any faster than 45 miles per hour (mph) during that first year.

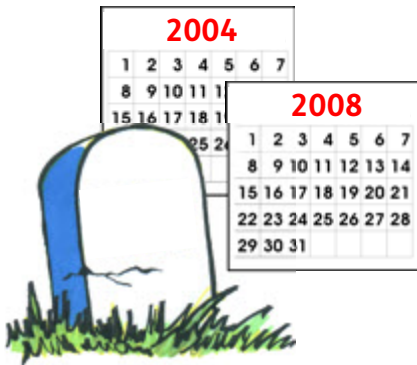


But because there are still a lot of crashes we are looking at how we can make this better.

# The problem



Almost 1 in every 5 new drivers has a crash in their first 6 months of driving.



Between 2004 and 2008 young drivers caused 1 in every 4 of all road deaths in Northern Ireland.



In that time young drivers caused 135 fatal crashes where 163 people died.



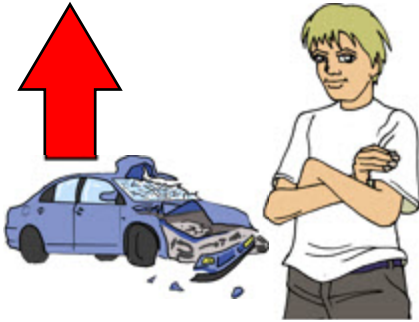
They also caused 816 serious crashes badly hurting 1,237 people.



Many of those killed and injured were young people themselves.



Well over half of all deaths and serious injuries happened on country roads.



Most new drivers are young.

Young people cause a lot more crashes than other drivers.



One of the main reasons seems to be that they do not have much experience of driving.



The high number of deaths and injuries on the roads caused by young drivers is costing about £90 million every year.

# What can be done?

There are 3 main ways we can make the roads safer:



1. Make the driving test and the way we teach people better. For example, test people on how well they can drive alone without an examiner giving them directions.



2. Change the rules on how people learn to drive. For example changing how old you have to be to get a licence.



3. Bring in extra rules for new drivers which would protect them from causing crashes. For example, stop them from driving at night.

We could do all, or a mixture of these things.

# We want to hear your views



Here we have set out some ideas for making Northern Ireland's roads safer.



At the end of each section, please let us know what you think.



You can find out where to send your views on page **30**.



Or you can fill out this survey on the internet at:

[www.roadsafetyni.gov.uk/new-drivers.htm](http://www.roadsafetyni.gov.uk/new-drivers.htm)



The questions start on the next page.

## Issue 1

### Being older before you can get a licence.



At the moment anyone 17 or over can ask for a licence to drive.



We know that older drivers have fewer crashes. So if we raised the driving age it could save lives.



But it could make it harder for some young people to get around.

**What do you think? Should we...**  
(please tick one box)



- Keep the age people can ask for a licence at 17?
- Raise the age to 17 ½?
- Raise the age to 18 years?

## Issue 2

### Making learner drivers take a minimum number of driving lessons.



When we looked into it, we did not find that taking extra paid lessons made new drivers safer.

But we found that learner drivers who have had more practice do not have as many crashes after they have passed their test.



At least 50 hours of driving with an experienced driver seemed to help new drivers have fewer crashes when they started to drive on their own.

**What do you think? Should we...**  
(please tick one box)



Keep things as they are now?

This would mean learner drivers could still take as many lessons as they felt they needed.

And learners would not have to drive extra hours with someone who has passed their test.

More options on the next page.



Make learner drivers have to have so many paid driving lessons?



Make learner drivers have to spend so many hours (or drive so many miles) with someone who has already passed their test?



If you think learners should have to have so many paid lessons, how many do you think that should be?

If you think learners should have to spend so many hours (or drive so many miles) with someone who has already passed their test, how many miles or hours do you think that should be?

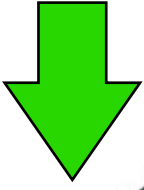


Miles

Hours

### Issue 3

#### Making learners spend longer learning to drive.



Learner drivers who have more experience of driving before they take their test do not have as many crashes later on.



We think this is maybe mostly because those people are older when they take their test.

**What do you think? Should we....**  
(please tick one box)



- Leave things how they are, so people can take as long as they think they need to learn to drive.
- Make people take driving lessons for at least 6 months.
- Make people take driving lessons for at least 12 months?



Would you like to say any more about why you chose that? Please write below.



### Issue 3a

**At what age do you think people should be able to start having driving lessons?**  
(please tick one box)

16

17

18

Older

## Issue 4

### Skid training for learners and new drivers.



Research says that advanced driving courses which teach skills such as how to deal with a skid, are **not** helpful for learner or new drivers.

**What do you think? Should we.....**  
(please tick one box)



- Leave things as they are, so people can make up their own mind about skid training?
- Help learner drivers to have skid training?
- Help new drivers to have skid training?
- Tell learner drivers they must have skid training?
- Tell new drivers they must have skid training?



Would you like to say more about why you chose that. Please write below.

## Issue 5

### Speed limits for learners and new drivers.



At the moment learners and new drivers must keep to 45 mph or less.

This is meant to help them keep safe. But some people say it means they are not able to learn how to control a car going faster.

**What do you think? Should we.....**  
(please tick one box)



Leave things how they are and keep a 45 mph speed limit for new drivers?

Raise the speed limit for these drivers to 50 mph?

Raise the speed limit for these drivers to 55 mph?

Raise the speed limit for these drivers to 60 mph?

Allow learners and new drivers to drive within the same speed limits as all other drivers on motorways and dual carriageways only?

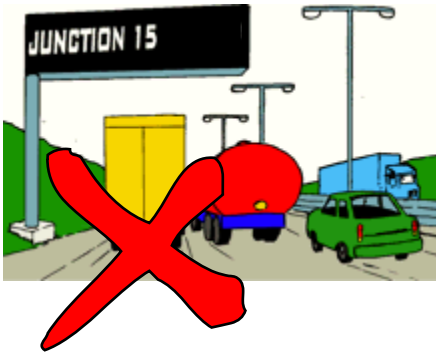
Allow learners and new drivers to keep to the same speed limits as all other drivers?



Would you like to say more about why you chose that. Please write below.

## Issue 6

### Allowing learner drivers on motorways.



At the moment, learner drivers are not allowed on motorways.

Some drivers who have just passed their test say they are worried about driving on motorways as they are not used to them.



**What do you think? Should we.....**  
(please tick one box)

Leave things how they are, with learner drivers not allowed on motorways?

Allow learners on motorways as long as they are with a qualified driving instructor in a car with dual controls?

Allow learners on motorways as long as there is another driver in the car who is over 21 and has been driving for 3 years?

Would you like to say more about why you chose that. Please write below,





## Issue 7

### The driving test.

The car driving test comes in 2 parts. First, learners take a written test.



Then, within 2 years, they must take a 'practical' test, taking a car out on the road. Some people say that the practical driving test only shows that learners are able to control a car.



They say the test does not give people a chance to show they know how to drive on different types of road.

Also, some people feel that learner drivers should be tested to see if they are thinking about keeping themselves and other road users safe on the road.



One idea would be to get learner drivers to fill out a workbook.

This could cover many of the different things that people should know about before they go out on the roads alone.

**What do you think? Should we.....**  
(please tick one box)



Change the practical driving test so that learners are taken out on busier roads. This could include faster roads like dual carriageways (if learners are allowed to drive at more than 45 mph).

Help learners to fill out student workbooks or 'driver records.' These would include a list of the things that all learner drivers should know and can do before they go out on the road alone.

Make learners fill out a student workbook or 'driver record' before they are allowed to take the driving test?

Would you like to say more about why you chose that. Or do you have anything else to say about the practical driving test and if it tests people on the right things?  
Please write below.





## Issue 8

### Stopping new drivers from driving at night.

We know that teenagers, especially men, are more likely to have a crash at night.



We also know that stopping young people driving at night for a while after they first get their test does cut the number of road crashes.



But it would mean that some new drivers might find it harder to get to work, or to education, or just be out and about.



This would be most true for people living in country areas where there is less other transport.

Stopping new drivers from driving after midnight or 1 in the morning stops some crashes.

Stopping new drivers from driving after 9pm or 10pm stops the most crashes.



## What do you think? Should we.....

(please tick one box)

Leave things as they are and let new drivers drive at night if they want to?

Stop all new drivers from driving between 9pm and 5am for the first 6 months after they take their driving test unless there is another driver in the car who is over 21 and has been driving for 3 years?

Stop all new drivers from driving between 9pm and 5am for the first 12 months after they take their driving test unless there is another driver in the car who is over 21 and has been driving for 3 years?

Stop all new drivers from driving between midnight and 5am for the first 6 months after they take their driving test, unless they have someone who has passed the driving test with them?

Stop all new drivers from driving between midnight and 5am for the first 12 months after they take their driving test unless they have someone who has passed the driving test with them?



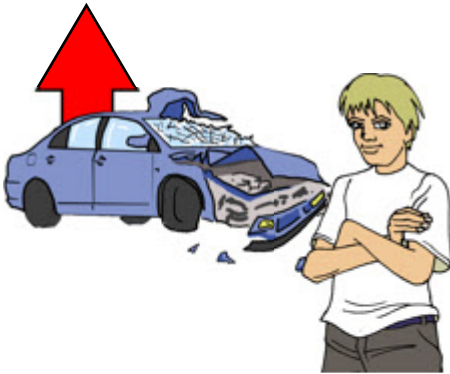
Would you like to say more about why you chose that answer? Please write below.



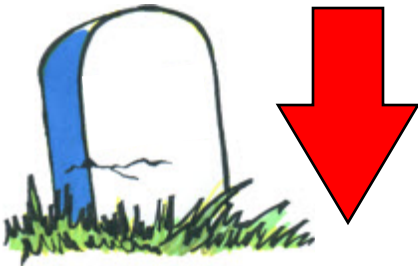
Do you think that some new drivers should be allowed to drive at night? If so, which ones?

## Issue 9

### Stopping new drivers from taking passengers.



We know that when teenage drivers have passengers their age they are more likely to have a crash. And the more passengers they have, the more likely they are to have a crash.



Stopping new drivers from taking passengers, including members of their family, would mean fewer deaths.

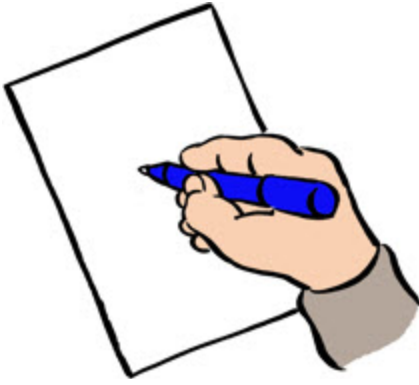
**What do you think? Should we....**  
(please tick one box)



Leave things as they are, so that new drivers can take passengers if they want to?

Stop new drivers from taking passengers under 17, except members of their family, for the first 6 months after they pass the test unless there is another driver in the car who is over 21 and has been driving for 3 years?

Stop new drivers from taking passengers under 17, except members of their family, for the first 12 months after they pass the test unless there is another driver in the car who is over 21 and has been driving for 3 years?



Would you like to say more about why you chose that answer? Please write below.

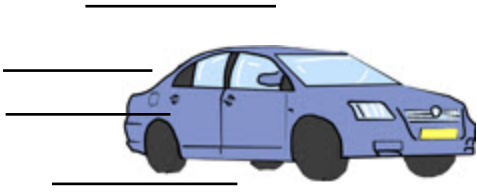


Do you think that some new drivers should be allowed to take passengers? If so, which new drivers?



## Issue 10

### Stopping learners and new drivers from using very fast cars.



We do not know that stopping learners and new drivers from driving fast cars would lead to fewer crashes.



It could mean they drive smaller cars that are less safe. This could make having a serious crash more likely.

### What do you think? Should we...

(please tick one box)



- Leave things as they are and let learners and new drivers use any car they want to?
- Stop learners and new drivers from using fast cars?



Would you like to say more about why you chose that answer? Please write below.



## Issue 11

**Making new drivers show they can drive safely.**

We know that drivers who break the law when they have just passed the test are more likely to have crashes in later life.



So one idea would be to make new drivers show that they can drive safely by not breaking any motoring laws for 6 months, or a year.

Only then would they be given their full driving licence.



**What do you think? Should we...**  
(please tick one box)

Leave things how they are, so new drivers do not have to show they can drive safely by not breaking any motoring laws.

Make new drivers show that they can drive safely by not breaking any motoring laws for 6 months before they get their full licence?

Make new drivers show that they can drive safely by not breaking any motoring laws for 12 months before they get their full licence?



Would you like to say more about why you chose that answer? Please write below.

## Issue 12

### Making the Restricted (R) driver scheme last longer.



We know that it is only after driving for more than 2 years that new drivers start to have fewer crashes.

If we made the Restricted (R) driver scheme last longer it could help cut the number of road crashes.

**What do you think? Should we...**  
(please tick one box)



- Leave things as they are so people only have to carry an R plate for 12 months?
- Make new drivers carry an R plate for 2 years?
- Get rid of R plates for new drivers?

Would you like to say more about why you chose that answer? Please write below.



## What to do next



You can fill out this survey on the internet at:  
**[www.roadsafetyni.gov/new-drivers.htm](http://www.roadsafetyni.gov/new-drivers.htm)**

Or send your answers to:



**Betty Holland  
Road Safety Policy Branch (2)  
Road Safety Division  
Department of the Environment  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8GB**



Email: **[betty.holland@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:betty.holland@doeni.gov.uk)**



Phone: **028 9054 1165**

Textphone: **028 9054 0642**



Thank you for giving us your views and helping to make Northern Ireland's roads safer.



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