

## Proposed Changes to the Learner and Restricted Driver Schemes and Graduated Driver Licensing

### What's it all about?

The Department of the Environment is in charge of lots of things, including road safety. We have looked at the numbers of people killed and injured on the roads here - the numbers are a little better than they used to be but are still very high. We also looked at what is being done in other countries to reduce road accidents.

We have come up with 12 ideas that might help reduce the numbers of people being killed and injured. Now we want to know what people think of the ideas - that includes **YOU**.

You can let us know what you think of our ideas, and tell us about your own ideas. We would like to meet with your group if we can arrange a suitable time.

We need to meet with you before **19 July 2011** – you can contact us in any of the following ways:

Write to: Betty Holland  
Road Safety Policy Branch (2)  
Road Safety Division  
Department of the Environment  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8GB  
or Email: [betty.holland@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:betty.holland@doeni.gov.uk)  
or Telephone: 028 9054 1165 or Text phone: 028 9054 0642



If you like you can complete our on-line questionnaire:  
<http://www.roadsafetyni.gov.uk/new-drivers.htm>  
Or you can send your views in writing to the address above.



## What's the problem?



We are worried that so many young people are involved in road accidents - either as the driver of the car that caused the accident or as someone hurt or killed in the accident. Here are some facts:

- Between 2004 - 2008 young drivers (aged 17-24) caused 951 accidents - 163 people died and 1,237 people were seriously injured;
- In those accidents many of the victims were also young people - 118 of those who died and 703 of those who were seriously injured;
- Two thirds of the accidents happened on rural roads;
- Only 15% of drivers are young but they are responsible for 41% of all road deaths and 34% of all serious injuries.

Why are so many young drivers involved in accidents? We know from research that the age at which people start learning to drive and start driving on their own is a factor but the amount of driving experience they have is even more important.

## What we want to do

- To reduce the number of people killed in road collisions by at least 60% by 2020;
  - To reduce the number of people seriously injured in road collisions by at least 45% by 2020;
  - To reduce the number of children (aged 0 to 15) killed or seriously injured in road collisions by at least 55% by 2020;
- and
- To reduce the number of young people (aged 16 to 24) killed or seriously injured in road collisions by at least 55% by 2020.



## How can we do it?

Based on our research and talking to experts we have come up with twelve main ideas of how we might be able to reduce road deaths and injuries.



Before we decide which of the ideas we will take on board we want to know what people here think of them.

### **IDEA 1**      **Raise the age at which you can get a licence**



This might help because older drivers have fewer accidents. You can get a licence now at age 17.

Should we raise the age? And if so, what should the age be?

### **IDEA 2**      **Make learner drivers take a minimum number of driving lessons and / or more driving practice**



Research shows that having more paid lessons may not make a difference – but more practice can help new drivers be safer on the roads.

Should learners have to take at least a particular number of lessons? How many lessons? Should they have to have so many hours

### **IDEA 3**      **Make learners spend a set amount of time learning to drive before they can take the driving test**



This would give learners more driving experience before they start to drive on their own, and that might help them to be safer drivers.

Should we have a set amount of time for learning to drive? How long should that be? What age should people be allowed to start taking lessons?



#### **IDEA 4**    **Make learners and new drivers have training in how to handle the car going into a skid**



Our research says that this type of training is actually NOT a good idea for learners and new drivers.

**What do you think?**

#### **IDEA 5**    **Change or take away speed limits that learners and new drivers have to follow**



At the moment learner and new drivers are not allowed to drive above 45mph. We can't be sure whether this helps them drive more safely or not – and some people think it might actually be a bad thing as they don't get to practice how to drive safely at a higher speed.

**What do you think?** Should we allow learners and new drivers to drive at whatever the speed limit is or should we set a particular limit for them? If we set a limit – should it be 45mph, 50mph, 55mph or 60mph?

#### **IDEA 6**    **Allow learners to drive on motorways**



At the moment people learning to drive are not allowed to drive on motorways – even when they are with an instructor or an experienced driver. Some new drivers say they are nervous about driving on a motorway because they didn't practice this when they were learning to drive.



**What do you think?** Should we allow learner drivers to drive on motorways? If so, should they be with a qualified instructor, or someone with 3 years driving experience?

#### **IDEA 7**    **Change the driving part of the driving test**



As well as doing a written test learners have to pass a driving test with an examiner before they get a licence. Some people think the driving test is just about things like starting, steering and stopping the car – it leaves out things like safe driving and attitudes to speed. We could make sure the test takes place in different types of traffic conditions or we could ask learners to keep a work book about their driving experience and what they are learning.

**Are these good ideas?** Do you have any ideas about how the test could be changed to help drivers think more about safety?

## IDEA 8 **Don't allow new drivers to carry passengers**

We know that half of all crashes involving teenagers happen at night. Other countries have stopped new drivers from driving after 9.00 pm and the number of night-time accidents went down a lot. So this should help to reduce the numbers of deaths and injuries. But – is it fair to stop new drivers driving at night – they may need to go to work or night classes. It may be the only way they can get around – especially if they live out in the country.



**What do you think?** Should we stop new drivers driving at night? If so, what time should we set? How long should they be not allowed to drive at night?

## IDEA 9 **Don't allow new drivers to carry passengers**

Research shows that there is a much greater chance of an accident when teenage drivers carry teenage passengers.



Should we stop new drivers from carrying passengers under 17, except close family members, unless they have an experienced driver with them? If so, how long should they be stopped for?

## IDEA 10 **Don't allow learners and new drivers to drive cars that are built to go very fast**

Research shows that banning fast cars for learner and new drivers doesn't make a difference to the number of crashes. In fact, it may be that smaller cars are less safe.



**What do you think?**



## IDEA 11 **Make new drivers prove they can drive safely for a period of time**

New drivers have to follow certain rules. We already say that new drivers have to keep under 45mph and have "R" plates on their car for a year – and we are thinking of things like not allowing them to drive at night or carry young passengers.



Should we set a period of time for drivers to prove they can drive safely before we lift the rules? If so, how long should they have to drive safely for?

## IDEA 12

### Make new drivers carry "R" plates for two years instead of one year



After two years driving, new drivers start to have fewer crashes. If we made them follow new driver rules and have "R" plates for two years it could mean there are fewer crashes.

**What do you think?** Should we increase the "R" plate period to two years?

# Thank you for your help!



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