

Debate Pack

24 January 2025

CDP-0021 (2025)

By Roger Tyers (subject
specialist),
Iona Stewart (statistician),
Tim Robinson (compiler)

Road safety for young drivers

1	Background	2
2	Press and media articles	9
3	Government sources	11
4	Parliamentary questions	12
5	Other Parliamentary material	23
6	Further reading	24

1 Background

A Westminster Hall debate on road safety for young drivers is scheduled for Tuesday 28 January 2025, from 9:30am to 11:00am. The debate will be led by Julia Buckley MP (Labour, Shrewsbury).

1.1 Road safety statistics

Younger car drivers (aged between 17 and 24) account for a relatively large proportion of both car driver casualties and casualties in collisions involving cars.

Casualties from collisions involving a younger car driver include: the younger car driver themselves, the passengers of the cars driven by younger drivers and all other casualties (including drivers and passenger of other vehicles, or other road users for example pedestrians).

The table below shows casualties by severity ([defined in the box below](#)):

- younger car driver casualties compared to all car driver casualties - 18% of all car driver fatalities were younger car drivers in 2023.
- casualties from collisions involving a younger car driver compared to collisions involving all car drivers - 23% of fatalities from collisions involving a car driver were from a collision involving at least one younger car driver in 2023.

Reported casualties by severity, Great Britain, 2023				
	Killed	Serious	Slight	All
Car driver casualties				
Younger car driver	90	1,327	7,148	8,565
All car drivers	487	7,331	42,565	50,383
% younger car drivers	18%	18%	17%	17%
Casualties from collisions involving a younger car driver				
Younger car driver	290	4,669	18,918	23,877
All car drivers	1,255	23,017	93,432	117,704
% involving younger car drivers	23%	20%	20%	20%

Source: Department for Transport (DfT), [Reported road casualties Great Britain: older and younger driver factsheets, 2023](#), Younger driver factsheet: data tables, Tables 1 and 2

Casualties by severity

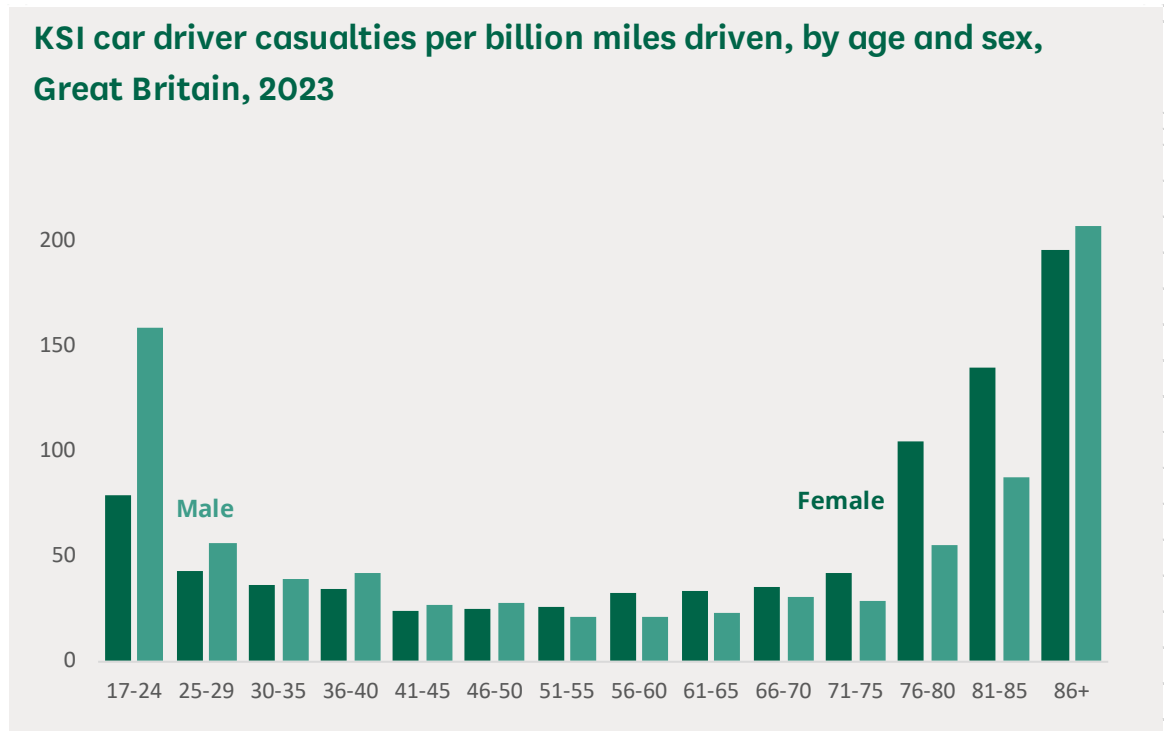
Casualties are broken down into fatalities (people killed in road collisions), and those injured (further split into seriously and slightly injured based on type of injury sustained). Killed and seriously injured casualties are commonly grouped together as 'KSIs'.

- A serious injury is one which resulted in the person being admitted to hospital as an inpatient, or any injury that included fractures, concussion, internal injuries, crushing, burns, severe cuts, severe shock requiring medical treatment, and injuries causing death 30 or more days after the collision.
- A slight injury could include whiplash, a sprain, a bruise, or a cut, in cases not judged to be severe.
- A fatal collision is one that resulted in the death of at least one person.

The DfT data includes all collisions resulting in injury to a human that became known to the police within 30 days. Some collisions resulting in injury are not reported to the police. The data includes only collisions occurring on public roads (including footways) but not private roads or car parks.

While it has long been known that non-fatal (and particularly slight) casualties are under-reported to the police, the overall trends are likely to reflect genuine changes.

The chart below shows there is an increased KSI rate for younger car drivers. In particular, males aged 17 to 24 are 4 times as likely to be killed or seriously injured while driving compared with all car drivers aged 25 or over.



Source: Department for Transport (DfT), [Reported road casualties Great Britain: older and younger driver factsheets, 2023](#), Younger driver factsheet: data tables, Chart 1

Key statistics:

- In 2023, a younger driver was involved in around a fifth of all killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties from collisions involving cars.
- Between 2004 and 2023 KSI casualties from a collision involving at least one younger car driver decreased from 12,257 to 4,959, a fall of 60%. Those involving other aged car drivers decreased from 31,130 to 19,349, a fall of 38%.
- Between 2019 and 2023, 48% of KSI casualties in younger car driver collisions occurred on rural roads, compared to 42% for other aged car drivers collisions.
- Between 2019 and 2023, 16% of younger car drivers involved in KSI collisions did not wear seatbelts, which was the highest proportion of all age groups. In comparison, the lowest percentage was seen in the 70 and above age group with 4% and the average was 10%.

The most common contributory factor allocated to vehicles driven by a younger car driver involved in fatal or serious collisions (FSC) with another vehicle was ‘driver failed to look properly’ (19%).

Cars driven by a younger driver were more likely to have the following contributory factors compared to vehicles driven by drivers of other ages: ‘loss of control’ (14% compared to 6%), ‘exceeding speed limit’ (12%

compared to 4%) and ‘learner or inexperienced driver’ (8% compared to 0%), ‘driver or rider impaired by alcohol’ (7% compared to 5%).¹

The Library dashboard, [Constituency data: road traffic collisions and casualties](#), can be used to analyse the number of road traffic casualties by severity, vehicle type and age between 2018 and 2023. You can also viewing trends over time since 2000 at constituency level.²

1.2

Government policy on young and new drivers

Existing restrictions on new drivers

New drivers are subject to extra restrictions through the Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995. Under the provisions on that Act, on acquiring their first full licence, a new driver is on probation for two years, regardless of their age.³

Whereas other drivers can accrue up to 12 points before they face disqualification, a new driver is subject to a limit of six penalty points received for any driving offences, which includes any that they received during their learning stage.⁴ If six or more points are received, a driver’s licence is revoked and they must apply again for a provisional licence, and re-take their practical and theory tests.⁵

Graduated Driving Licences

Graduated Driving Licensing (GDL) means imposing post-test licence restrictions such as controls on the time of day the restricted licence holder can drive unsupervised, or restrictions on the passengers they can carry. GDL has never been used in Great Britain but has been used in several other countries.

The government said in November 2024 that it was not considering GDL:

Whilst we are not considering Graduated Driving Licences, we absolutely recognise that young people are disproportionately victims of tragic incidents on our roads, and we are considering other measures to tackle this problem and protect young drivers.⁶

¹ Department for Transport (DfT), [Reported road casualties Great Britain: older and younger driver factsheets, 2023](#), 26 September 2024

² House of Commons Library, [Constituency data: road traffic collisions and casualties](#), 24 October 2024

³ [Road Traffic \(New Drivers\) Act 1995, s1](#)

⁴ [Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988, s35](#)

⁵ [Gov.uk Reapply for your driving licence if you've been disqualified](#) [Accessed 23 January 2025]

⁶ PQ 16005 [[Driving Licences: Young People](#)], answered 28 November 2024

The Department for Transport (DfT)'s [2019 Road safety statement](#) notes that, of English-speaking countries, the following jurisdictions have GDL schemes:

- parts of the USA (New York and California)
- parts of Canada (Ontario and British Columbia)
- parts of Australia (New South Wales and Victoria)
- all of New Zealand⁷

Among these jurisdictions, GDL rules include limits on carrying passengers, night-driving, stricter laws on the use of mobile phones and/or drink driving, and mandatory pre-test training periods. For example, in California drivers aged under 18 cannot take passengers aged under 20 unless supervised. In New Zealand, young and newly-qualified drivers go onto a restricted licence which means they cannot drive unsupervised at night.⁸

The Road Safety statement notes that there is evidence to suggest that these GDL schemes have “proved very effective at improving the safety of young drivers” but that such schemes also “have the potential to restrict young people’s access to education and employment.”⁹

Northern Ireland

Unlike in Great Britain, driving standards and licensing are devolved issues in Northern Ireland. There have been moves to introduce GDL in Northern Ireland, which the UK Government said in 2018 would serve as a pilot study into its effectiveness “to gather evidence on the potential for GDL in Great Britain”.¹⁰

The [Road Traffic \(Amendment\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#) provided the statutory framework to introduce a GDL scheme.¹¹ However, GDL has yet to be launched and it is unclear when it will be.

In October 2024 the Northern Ireland Minister for Infrastructure said that further legislation and funding were required to bring GDL into force, and no timeline for its implementation could be provided.¹² Irish News reported in April 2024 that the scheme might include mandatory six-month training and

⁷ DfT, [Road safety statement 2019: a lifetime of road safety](#), 19 July 2019, Annex A: Graduated Driving Licensing: a summary of restrictions in overseas countries, p59-63

⁸ DfT, [Road safety statement 2019: a lifetime of road safety](#), 19 July 2019, Annex A: Graduated Driving Licensing: a summary of restrictions in overseas countries, p59-63

⁹ DfT, [Road safety statement 2019: a lifetime of road safety](#), 19 July 2019, Annex A: Graduated Driving Licensing: a summary of restrictions in overseas countries, para 2.23 – 2.27

¹⁰ PQ 185125 [[Roads: Safety](#)], answered 6 November 2018

¹¹ [Road Traffic \(Amendment\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)

¹² Northern Ireland Assembly, [Written Question AQW 15803/22-27](#), answered 11 October 2024

log books for learner drivers, as well as restrictions on passengers and mandatory ‘R’ licence plates for two years, post-qualification.¹³

Parliamentary activity

2021 Committee inquiry

The Transport Committee carried out an inquiry into [Road safety: young and novice drivers](#) which was published in March 2021.¹⁴ This noted that that “GDL can be effective in reducing crash rates”, but that “there are also concerns over the impact such restrictions could have upon the social and economic opportunities available to young and novice drivers.”¹⁵

The committee recommended the government conduct research into the social and economic consequences of GDL, but the government declined to do so and said it had no plans to introduce GDL due to the negative impact it would have on young/novice drivers:

Whilst the Department for Transport acknowledges the Select Committee’s recommendation on continuing research into Graduated Driver Licensing, the Department will not be commissioning any research into the social and economic consequences of GDL.

[...] We remain of the opinion that statistics from other countries who use a form of licensing restrictions show that it is not comparable nor necessary in the United Kingdom at this time for young and novice drivers.

We are also conscious that any move to place any form of restrictions on young and novice drivers would be detrimental to their education and employment prospects, as well as the potential to negatively affect their social and mental health during the national recovery from COVID. These effects would also be felt more severely in rural or socio-economically challenged areas in the United Kingdom.

To this end, the Department for Transport has no plans to conduct research on or implement any form of a Graduated Driving License at this time.¹⁶

The Committee also recommended the government publish findings from its Driver 2020 research trial.¹⁷ [Driver 2020 was a DfT-commissioned trial](#) which started in 2019 and was run by the Transport Research Laboratory, a research consultancy. The trial tested interventions on newly qualified drivers aged between 17 and 24, such as the effectiveness of telematic GPS ‘vehicle

¹³ Irish News, [All the new driver rules coming into force: Mandatory six month training for learners, log books and 45mph limit removed](#), 3 April 2024

¹⁴ Transport Committee, [Road safety: young and novice drivers](#), 2 March 2021, HC 169, 2019–21

¹⁵ Transport Committee, [Road safety: young and novice drivers](#), 2 March 2021, HC 169, 2019–21, Summary

¹⁶ Transport Committee, [Road safety: young and novice drivers: Government Response to Committee’s Fourth Report of Session 2019–21](#), 13 May 2021, HC 29, 2019–21, Recommendation 7

¹⁷ Transport Committee, [Road safety: young and novice drivers: Government Response to Committee’s Fourth Report of Session 2019–21](#), 13 May 2021, HC 29, 2019–21, Recommendation 9

trackers', the use of a logbook, extra hazard perception, classroom-based education, and mentoring agreements.¹⁸

However, the government told the committee that Driver 2020 had been delayed due to the Covid pandemic and therefore the results from the trial could not be shared.¹⁹ In February 2024 the government said it was still awaiting the results from the Driver 2020 trial.²⁰ Ministers have not produced any further details on the trial since then.

Ten Minute Rule Bill

In May 2024 Kim Leadbeater MP (Labour, Batley and Spen) introduced the [Motor Vehicles \(Driving Licences\) \(New Drivers\) bill](#) under the ten minute rule.²¹ This would have created a GDL scheme for newly qualified drivers. The bill did not progress past first reading, but the MP said it had the support of the AA and the RAC.²²

GDL also has the support of other organisations such as the [Association of British Insurers](#) (ABI) and the road safety charity, [Brake](#).²³

¹⁸ [HC Deb 20 February 2024 c254](#)

¹⁹ Transport Committee, [Road safety: young and novice drivers: Government Response to Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2019–21](#), 13 May 2021, HC 29, 2019–21, Recommendation 9

²⁰ [HC Deb 20 February 2024 c254](#)

²¹ [Motor Vehicles \(Driving Licences\) \(New Drivers\) Bill 2023-24](#)

²² [HC Deb 7 May 2024 c481](#)

²³ ABI, [Graduated Driver Licensing \(GDL\)](#), [Accessed 23 January 2025]; Brake, [Progressive licensing for young and newly qualified drivers](#), [Accessed 23 January 2025]

2

Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[Mother of teen killed in road crash tragedy welcomes parliamentary debate on licence changes](#)

Shropshire Star
Dominic Robertson
22 January 2025

[Decision to cut road safety GCSE reversed](#)

BBC News (Northern Ireland)
Robbie Meredith
18 January 2025

[Driving licence changes gain support as restrictions on young motorists could be implemented next year](#)

GB News
Hemma Visavadia
30 December 2024

[Laughing gas crash driver who killed his friends jailed for nine years](#)

The Guardian
Matthew Weaver
18 December 2024

[Dad of woman paralysed by teen who used phone nine times before crashing car makes heartbreaking admission about grandson](#)

Lad Bible
Jess Battison
26 November 2024

['More regulations solve nothing' Readers weigh in on proposals to ban young drivers from carrying passengers](#)

The Independent
28 October 2024

['It's my car - why should an under-21 not be allowed in it?'](#)

BBC News
George Sandeman and Nabiha Ahmed
26 October 2024

AA calls for ban on new drivers under 21 carrying passengers of similar age in UK

The Guardian
Rachel Hall
21 October 2024

Here's what a UK Graduated Driver's Licence scheme could look like

Auto Express
Tom Jervis
21 October 2024

Graduated Driver Licences could save 58 lives annually, says the AA

Automobile Association (AA)
21 October 2024

'Perverse' proposal to stop young drivers from giving lifts sparks row

The Sunday Telegraph
Camilla Turner
11 May 2024

Failure to introduce GDL 'a major flaw in British policymaking'

Road Safety GB
Dr Ian Greenwood
16 April 2024

'It's not their fault': calls for curbs on young drivers after fatal Welsh crash

The Guardian
Steven Morris
24 November 2023

3

Government sources

[Reported road casualties in Great Britain: younger driver factsheet, 2023](#),
Department for Transport, 26 September 2024

[Reported road casualties in Great Britain: younger driver factsheet, 2022](#),
Department for Transport, 28 September 2023

[Reported road casualties in Great Britain: younger driver factsheet, 2021](#),
Department for Transport, 24 November 2022

4

Parliamentary questions

Driving Licences: Northern Ireland

18 Dec 2024 | 20006

Asked by: Mr Gregory Campbell

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2024 to Question 14917 on Driving Licences: Northern Ireland, when she plans to announce the other measures.

Answering member: Lilian Greenwood | Department for Transport

Further measures to support young and novice drivers are being considered. More information will be set out in due course.

Driving Licences: Young People

28 Nov 2024 | 16005

Asked by: Dr Scott Arthur

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing Graduated Driving Licences for young people.

Answering member: Lilian Greenwood | Department for Transport

Whilst we are not considering Graduated Driving Licences, we absolutely recognise that young people are disproportionately victims of tragic incidents on our roads, and we are considering other measures to tackle this problem and protect young drivers.

Driving Licences: Northern Ireland

25 Nov 2024 | 14917

Asked by: Mr Gregory Campbell

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she has had discussions with the Minister for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland on the graduated driving licence pilot scheme.

Answering member: Lilian Greenwood | Department for Transport

No discussions have taken place with the Minister for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland on the graduated driving licence pilot scheme.

Whilst we are not considering Graduated Driving Licences, we absolutely recognise that young people are disproportionately victims of tragic incidents on our roads, and we are considering other measures to tackle this problem and protect young drivers.

Newly Qualified Young Drivers

11 Nov 2024 | 840 cc1566-1569

Tabled by: Baroness Seccombe

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce legislation further to regulate newly qualified young drivers.

Asked by: Lord Colgrain

My Lords, on behalf of my noble friend Lady Seccombe, and with her permission, I beg leave to ask the Question standing in her name on the Order Paper.

Answering Member: Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill | Department for Transport

This Government take road safety very seriously, and reducing the number of those killed and injured on our roads is a key priority. The department is currently considering policy options in this area, and my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Transport is meeting with campaigners this week. While we are not considering graduated driving licences, we absolutely recognise that young people are disproportionately victims of tragic incidents on our roads, and we are considering other measures to tackle this problem and to protect young drivers.

Asked by: Lord Colgrain

When a young person passes their driving test, it is an occasion for pride and congratulation; it is seldom mentioned that they have been put in charge of a lethal weapon. Any subsequent accident that brings about their death or the death of their friends causes excruciating pain to their families and survivors, and it begs many questions. Does the Minister agree with me, therefore, that we should do more to mitigate these terrible circumstances? Does he support the suggestion that, for six months after a driving test is passed, the driver should be allowed only one passenger, located in the front seat? Does he agree that, before a test is taken, the learner driver should be made to watch the film produced by county fire and rescue services, which narrates in graphic detail the role played by fire, police and ambulance services when a fatal accident occurs?

Answering Member: Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill | Department for Transport

Every death on our roads is a tragedy, and our thoughts remain with the families of everyone who has lost a loved one in this way. As I have said, the Secretary of State is meeting this week with some campaigners who, tragically, are in that position. There is a form of restricting novice drivers through the Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995. On acquiring their first full licence, a new driver is on probation for two years. During that time, they are subject to a more rigorous limit of penalty points, and if they breach that they

will lose their full licence. I have not seen the film that the noble Lord refers to but will certainly give that some thought.

Asked by: Lord Swire

Granted, the priority must be to deal with the backlog of young people taking their driving test, in order to increase their productivity, but is it not also time to look again at the basic driving test, whereby a young person can pass and drive away from that test for the first time on either a motorway or in the dark?

Answering Member: Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill | Department for Transport

The Government and their agency are working extremely hard to reduce the backlog of driving test appointments, but it is also quite clear that people should be ready for the test at the time that they present themselves to take it. The department's THINK! campaign, which is a road safety campaign, is aimed primarily at young men aged 17 to 24. It focuses on a number of priority issues, all of which would help to reduce death and serious injury both to that category and to other road users.

[...]

Asked by: Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

My Lords, I draw attention to my interests. One of the issues for young drivers is the enormous cost of insurance, and the insurance industry would like to help address that. Therefore, a probation period or maybe zero alcohol for the first five years or until a certain age might be a way to help insurance companies to produce better rates for young drivers, for whom a car can be essential for work. Would the Minister agree to look at a range of possibilities, so that we can keep young people on the road more safely?

Answering Member: Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill | Department for Transport

Of course, we all agree that insurance is necessary and that its costs have been rising. Indeed, my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Transport has instituted a review, with the aid of the industry, about the cost of insurance. There are a number of ideas to help young drivers obtain insurance, some of which need great thought to make sure that they are enforceable. The primary way that they can get insurance and remain safe is to practise for the test properly, to take the test, to be successful and then to drive with the same safety that we want of everybody on the roads.

[...]

Driving Licences

16 May 2024 | 25196

Asked by: Daniel Kawczynski

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing graduated driving licences.

Answering member: Guy Opperman | Department for Transport

I discussed the issue of graduated driving licences with the MP for Shrewsbury and Atcham and his constituent on 17 April. Since then, the Department for Transport has been considering the Driver 2020 project and further measures the Department can take to improve road safety for young drivers. The Department is still reviewing its position.

Driving Licences

06 Feb 2024 | 12484

Asked by: Kim Leadbeater

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to extend graduated driving licences from motorbike users to newly qualified car drivers.

Answering member: Guy Opperman | Department for Transport

The Department keeps driving licensing requirements under review, but there are not any plans to introduce any further restrictions on newly qualified car drivers.

We have a form of restricting novice drivers through the Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995. On acquiring their first full licence, a new driver is on 'probation' for two years. During this time, they are subject to a limit of six penalty points received for any driving offences (including any received when in the learning stage). If six or more points are received, then a driver's licence is revoked and must apply again for a provisional licence, re-entering the learning stage.

Two years after passing their first driving test, or on passing again after being subject to licence revocation under the Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995, drivers enter the full licence stage. There are no restrictions in this stage beyond basic legal requirements.

For new and novice drivers the Department's broad aim is to improve road safety through new technology and research; and particularly for young drivers, developing better learning opportunities and targeted educational messaging, while reinforcing vital road safety messages through our THINK! Campaigns.

Driving Licence: Young and Newly Qualified Drivers

15 Jan 2024 | 835 cc218-221

Asked by: Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are planning to introduce a graduated driving licence for young and newly qualified drivers.

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

My Lords, the Department for Transport has no plans to introduce a graduated driving licence scheme for young drivers. The department commissioned the £2 million Driver2020 research project to examine interventions designed to help learner and newly qualified drivers improve their skills and safety. We look forward to receiving the findings from that project, which will feed into considerations on further measures we could take to improve road safety for young drivers.

Asked by: Baroness Randerson

My Lords, the Minister will know that, in Wales, seven young men—still teenagers—lost their lives in tragic car accidents in the few weeks before Christmas. Year after year, young drivers, particularly young men, are grossly overrepresented in road casualty rates, and research shows that a combination of inexperience and incomplete brain development often features in the cause of accidents—although I obviously cannot comment on the two concerned. There is widespread support for graduated driving licences from the Association of British Insurers, the RAC, Brake, Project EDWARD and the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety. Will the Minister agree to add to the work that the Government are currently doing a thorough look at their recommendations to see whether it is now time for graduated driving licences in order to save these lives?

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

I assure the noble Baroness that the Government take this very seriously and are always prepared to listen to what others have to say. Going back to my earlier point, our largest young driver research piece is the Driver2020 project, an evaluation of interventions to improve the safety of young, novice drivers in partnership with the Transport Research Laboratory. It started in 2019 with 28,000 learner and novice drivers taking part and was completed in summer 2022. We look forward to getting the report this year.

Asked by: Earl Attlee

My Lords, I remind the House of my interest as a qualified HGV driving instructor; I have done a lot of work with young drivers. Why does my noble friend the Minister not understand that young, novice drivers are completely ill-equipped and unable to block out distractions from youngsters in the back of the vehicle unless they have an older driver with them?

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

I do understand that. It is not a question of generalising; not all drivers are that bad. We must aim at making sure that the young, novice driver—who is perhaps not as experienced as others—is properly dealt with.

Asked by: Lord Liddle

My Lords, while one has enormous sympathy with what is behind this Question, how can the Government get into these matters of further sophistication when there is an enormous waiting list for driving tests? The last stated figure was an 18 and a half-week wait for a driving test, which is very important to people trying to get jobs. The Government are supposed to be working towards a nine-week target. Can the Minister report progress on that, or is it just another example of a country that is not working any more?

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

I cannot give the noble Lord exact figures on that issue, but we will have a look at it and perhaps write to him.

Asked by: Lord Swire

My Lords, no one wants to prevent young people getting in their cars to get jobs and so forth. But with the considerable increase in the volume of traffic, particularly on motorways, and the introduction of smart motorways, is it not ludicrous that a novice driver can pass their driving test and drive straight on to a motorway or in the dark, both of which they may never have done before?

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

I take my noble friend's point, but I think noble Lords should be aware that on acquiring their first full licence a new driver is on probation for two years. During that time, they are subject to a limit of six penalty points for any driving offences, including any received when in the learning stage. If six or more points are received, the driver loses their full licence and must apply again for a provisional licence, re-entering the learning stage, so it is quite stringent.

Asked by: Lord Carlile of Berriew

Does the noble Lord agree that one reason why young people sometimes drive so badly—and why so many young people are convicted of driving without insurance—is that the cost of insurance is way outside the budget of most families, even when the child in that family has learnt to drive through a driving school? Is it not time that the Government and the insurance industry got together to talk about educating young drivers to drive better and to obtain more driving experience?

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

I thank the noble Lord for that. He makes a very good point, and it is something which the Government could well look at.

Asked by: Lord Forsyth of Drumlean

My Lords, I declare an interest as someone who will be 70 later this year. Can my noble friend explain why it is that when you are 70, you have to reapply for your driving licence? Why pick on 70?

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

Can I say that I agree with my noble friend? At the age of 70, drivers must renew their entitlement and, at most, every three years after that. To renew the entitlement, they must make a legal declaration that they can meet the standards required to drive and confirm that they have listed any medical condition. That is the important point: whether there are any new medical conditions.

Asked by: Lord Watts

My Lords, while I support reviewing the issue of young drivers, perhaps if the Minister is to do that, he will look at older drivers. As far as I know, there have not been any young drivers driving up motorways in the wrong direction.

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

Again, I would say that it is about, every three years after becoming 70, making a medical declaration to ensure that a person is of sound mind and able to continue driving on our roads.

Asked by: Baroness Kramer

My Lords, many Members of this House are grandparents with teenage grandchildren. I say as one of them that it is exceedingly alarming to know that a new driver who has just passed their test can take a number of youngsters out after a party or some other gathering or to a gathering. Hopefully, they are not breaking the law by drinking, but the behaviour in the car and the distraction is a genuinely serious issue and a major cause of many of the accidents about which we are concerned.

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

The noble Baroness is absolutely right; I cannot disagree with her. That is why the Government have commissioned the young driver research piece, the Driver 2020 project, and I hope that it will produce some suggestions as to how we may deal with this.

Asked by: Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate

My Lords, I want to apologise to the House. About a year ago, I got up and claimed that insurance and other details said that women drivers were substantially better drivers than men, and I wanted to argue their case. Sadly, within 24 hours of my asking that question, two female members of my family committed minor offences in motor cars. I therefore wish to ask my noble friend to try to justify my position by indicating that between young drivers—young people of both sexes—young women drivers are safer drivers for insurance purposes than young men.

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

I am afraid I am not in a position to comment on that. What I can say, on a very serious point, is that, overall, the figures for 2022 are that one fifth of all car collisions resulting in death or serious injury involved young drivers aged between 17 and 24. In 2022, 1,365 young car drivers were killed or seriously injured. Young male car drivers aged 17 to 24 are four times as likely to be killed or seriously injured compared with all car drivers aged 25 or over.

Asked by: Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

My Lords, does the Minister agree that one of the major factors leading to the death or serious injury of those aged between 17 and 24 is a higher incidence of drink and drugs among that cohort, which is well known by the insurance industry? Does he recognise that we have the weakest rules relating to the amount that one can drink in the whole of Europe, apart from Malta? Is it not time that, when they come to undertake the review following the evidence being presented, the Government take action and require them to stay away from drinking in the way that they do at the moment?

Answering Member: Lord Davies of Gower | Department for Transport

The noble Lord makes a very good point. I appreciate everything that he says.

Driving Licences

5 June 2023 | 830 cc1117-1120

Asked by: Lord Naseby

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a graduated driving licence or other restrictions on newly qualified drivers.

Answering Member: Baroness Vere of Norbiton | Department for Transport

My Lords, every death or serious injury on our roads is a tragedy, and we continue to work tirelessly to improve road safety for all users. Our broad approach to improving safety for new and novice drivers includes new technology and improving education while reinforcing vital road safety messages through our THINK! campaign. There are not any current plans to introduce driving licence restrictions on newly qualified drivers.

Asked by: Lord Naseby

My Lords, I am greatly relieved to hear that Answer from my noble friend, because there are numerous rumours going round. I am sure young people will be greatly reassured. Nevertheless, is she aware of the other real problem that young people face today: that it is very difficult to get a test date when you are ready to take it? Is she aware that there are sellers out there using bots to Hoover up at least a quarter of all the exam slots and reselling them to learners desperate to take their test? Furthermore, there appear to be dozens of websites offering to find learners earlier booking slots for a fee as high as £300. Can my noble friend look closely at this abuse of the situation and take the appropriate action?

[...]

Asked by: Baroness Randerson

My Lords, every year over 400 young people, predominantly male, are killed or seriously injured on our roads. To go back to the beginning of the Question, probationary periods are common across the world for new drivers. Brake, the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety and the insurers themselves support probationary periods with some restrictions. In the UK, we use them for motorcycles and large vehicles, so why are we not looking at using them for car drivers?

Answering Member: Baroness Vere of Norbiton | Department for Transport

At the moment, the Government are undertaking an enormous research project in this area because we feel that we need the evidence base. If one looks across all the different countries where they have some sort of limits on licensing, there is no one size fits all; some countries put limits on before driving test are taken in terms of the amount of time one has to learn, while other countries decide to place certain restrictions post the test. We are doing a research project called Driver2020 and are investing £2 million in it; it kicked off in 2019 and involves 28,000 new and novice drivers. We are testing five different interventions to find out what we think might work in the future.

Asked by: Lord Grocott

My Lords, the Minister mentioned age. I am sure I am right in saying that a big proportion of people taking the test are age 17, 18 and 19, and many of them will need a driving licence to find employment, or at least it will be very helpful to them when they have one. What alarms me, among other things, about this long waiting list—the Minister has already told us that more than half of the people taking tests have to do it twice at least—is just how much the average cost is to a 17, 18 or 19 year-old, with top-up lessons if it is a prolonged period waiting for a test. Just how much does it cost? It is really alarming if there is a barrier to people simply on the basis of not being able to afford to do it.

Answering Member: Baroness Vere of Norbiton | Department for Transport

I accept that there is a cost to driving, to car ownership and to ensuring that one is safe on the roads in respect of one's responsibility to other people. We believe that the time taken to ensure that one is fully trained is important. That is why the second piece of research that we are doing is around a graduated learning scheme where we have asked the Driving Instructors Association to explore whether we can introduce a modular approach to learning. That will help all candidates go through the process and become safe drivers, and it may help them to minimise the costs as they learn the right skills at the right time.

Asked by: Baroness O'Loan

My Lords, is the Minister aware that in Northern Ireland there is a system in which drivers who pass their tests are required to display restricted plates and are restricted to driving below 45 miles per hour? Is she also aware that the biggest barrier to young people getting into a car and driving is the cost of insurance, which is prohibitive?

Answering Member: Baroness Vere of Norbiton | Department for Transport

I am aware that some form of graduated driving licence has been introduced in Northern Ireland. In Great Britain, we also have a probationary scheme that falls under the new drivers Act, whereby if any new driver gets six points within the first two years, they have their licence taken away and must take their test again. We are working with the industry on insurance. There may be something helpful around telematics in that regard. I do accept that insurance for young drivers is more expensive, and that is because they can often be riskier drivers.

Asked by: Baroness Taylor of Stevenage

My Lords, since 2018 learner drivers have been permitted to take motorway driving lessons with approved driving instructors, but few make use of this rule change. According to a recent AA survey, 83% of drivers say they have never seen a learner on the motorway. Has the department made an assessment of how many driving schools offer motorway lessons, and does the Minister believe that increasing the availability of these would better prepare learner drivers?

Answering Member: Baroness Vere of Norbiton | Department for Transport

The noble Baroness raises a very important point, and that leads back into the graduated learning scheme that we are looking at to ensure that new drivers have the opportunity to try out all sorts of different schemes. We are also looking at Toggle showing location of Column 1120 at one of the interventions from the Driver2020 research, which is a logbook that will record the time and type of driving, including motorway driving. But there are some parts of the country where there are no motorways, so I think it is really important that all driving instructors think about the types of roads they are taking their candidates on to ensure variety.

[...]

[Driving Licences: Young People](#)

14 Nov 2022 | 82187

Asked by: Fabian Hamilton

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing Graduated Driving Licences for young drivers.

Answering member: Mr Richard Holden | Department for Transport

The Department's broad aim for young road users is to improve road safety through new technology and research, and by developing better learning opportunities and targeted educational messaging.

Our largest Young Driver research piece is the Driver 2020 project; an evaluation of interventions to improve the safety of young novice drivers, in partnership with the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL). This project commenced in January 2019 and so far over 28,000 learner and novice drivers have been recruited. This project, which includes a telematics trial, aims to make young drivers safer, more confident, and more skillful in their first year of driving through non legislative, technical or educational measures with potential to lower their risk of collisions.

We look forward to receiving the findings from the Driver 2020 project, which will feed into considerations on further measures we can take to improve road safety for young drivers.

5

Other Parliamentary material

Road safety

7 January 2025 | 759 cc810-826

Agreed to on question.

Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (New Drivers)

7 May 2024 | 749 cc479-482

Motion for leave to bring in a Bill (Standing Order No. 23).

6

Further reading

[What are graduated driving licences?](#), RAC, 19 November 2024

[Constituency data: road traffic collisions and casualties](#), Commons Library data dashboard, 24 October 2024

[Road and Vehicle FAQs](#), Commons Library research briefing, CBP-9322, 2 August 2024

Charlotte Halkett, [Why a curfew for young drivers would be wrong for the UK](#), Insure the Box, 18 March 2023

[Road safety: young and novice drivers: Government Response to Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2019–21](#), Transport Committee, HC 29, 13 May 2021

[Road safety: young and novice drivers](#), Fourth report of Session 2019-21, Transport Committee, HC 169, 2 March 2021

[Graduated Driver Licensing \(GDL\)](#) (Association of British Insurers information page)

[Improving the Safety of Young Drivers](#) (PDF), Association of British Insurers (ABI), October 2012

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing '[Legal help: where to go and how to pay](#)' for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Sources and subscriptions for MPs and staff

We try to use sources in our research that everyone can access, but sometimes only information that exists behind a paywall or via a subscription is available. We provide access to many online subscriptions to MPs and parliamentary staff, please contact hoclibraryonline@parliament.uk or visit commonslibrary.parliament.uk/resources for more information.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)