

Written evidence submitted by the Department for Transport

The following information has been compiled using data from STATS19 reported road casualty statistics.

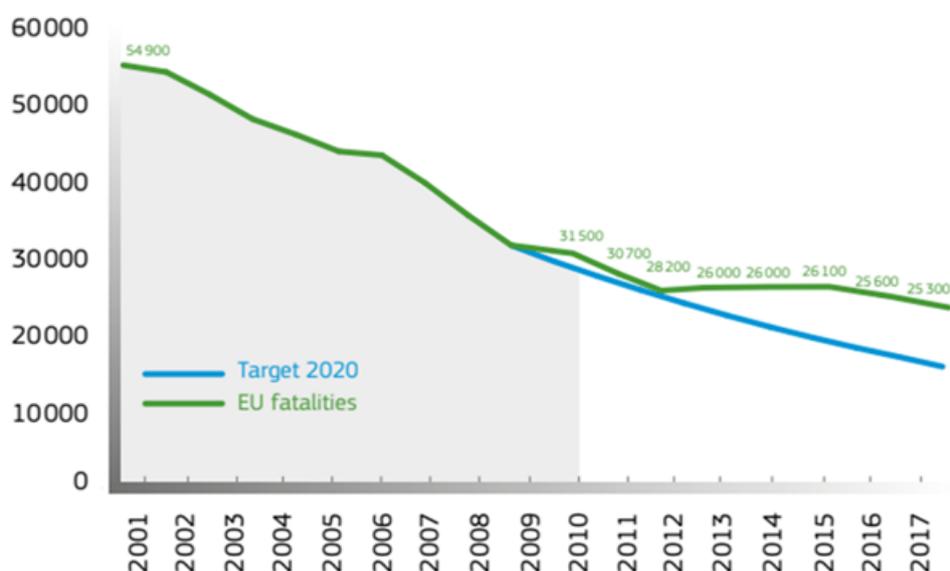
Where possible the latest 2018 data is used, but since only provisional statistics are available currently we have drawn on 2017 data for a more detailed analysis. We also include some analysis of 2016 data from a published factsheet on young car drivers¹.

General trends

The UK has some of the safest roads in the world, but we continue to look at ways of making them safer. The number of people killed on Britain's roads dropped by 66% from 1990 (5,217) to 2018 (1,784)². The casualty reduction rate however has recently stalled, with fatalities remaining stable at around 1,800 since 2010.

This plateauing in numbers of road fatalities in recent years is not unique to the UK – as shown in Figure 1, fatalities have also been broadly flat across the European Union since 2013.

Figure 1 Road fatalities in the EU since 2001



Source: European Commission Road Safety in the European Union Report 2018

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706516/young-car-drivers-factsheet.pdf

²

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-annual-report-2018>

Key trends for young car drivers:

We are committed to improving the safety of all road users, especially young drivers who are at a greater risk of being involved in a collision.

Young drivers are over-represented in collisions in Great Britain and around the world. Amongst OECD countries, road traffic crashes are the single greatest cause of death for 15-24-year olds and 18-20-year olds have the highest or second-highest traffic related mortality amongst most age groups (with a risk of death generally typically twice as high as the average population)³. Young drivers and riders aged between 15-25 are more likely to be killed on Europe's roads than their older counterparts⁴.

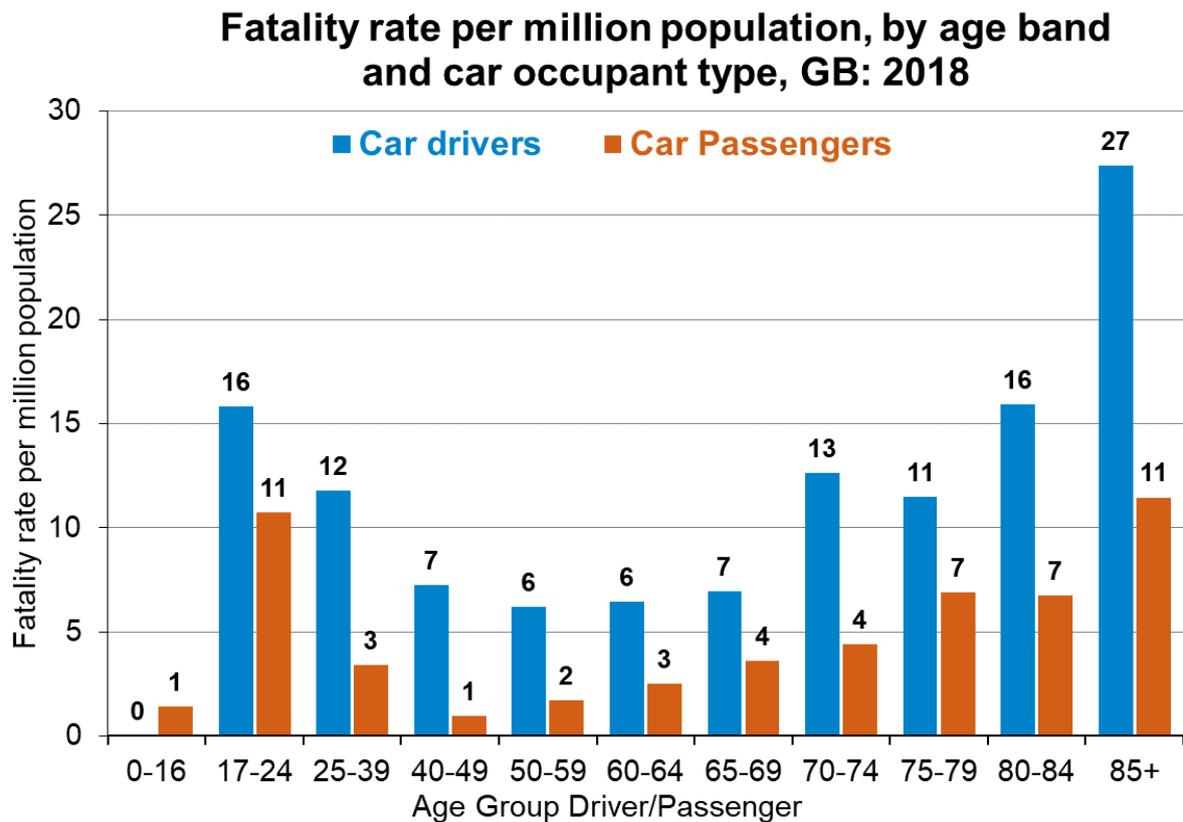
In Great Britain, young drivers aged between 17-24 account for 7% of full driving licence holders but were involved in 16% of fatal and serious accidents in 2018. The number of young car driver (aged 17-24) fatalities on Britain's roads is falling: 99 young drivers were killed in 2018, a 37% drop from 2010 (158) and a 78% drop from 1990 (448).

When accounting for population, young drivers have one of the highest fatality risks. Figure 2 shows that the fatalities rate per million population is highest for the young and oldest age groups (17-24 and 85+), both as car drivers and as car passengers.

³ https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/irtad-road-safety-annual-report-2018_0.pdf

⁴ https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017_01_26_young_drivers_report.pdf

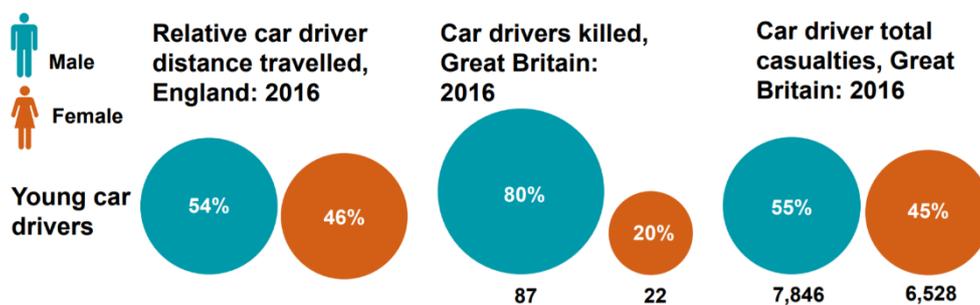
Figure 2 Fatality rate per million population and car occupant type



Source: DfT STATS19 and ONS -

As shown in Figure 3 (taken from the young car drivers factsheet⁵), in 2016 55% of young car drivers casualties in Great Britain were male which is broadly in line with distance driven by young car drivers by gender. However, males accounted for 80 per cent of young car driver fatalities in 2016. This suggests that a young female car driver is just as likely to be injured in a collision as a young male car driver, but young male car drivers are more likely to be killed.

Figure 3 Young driver casualties by gender, Great Britain 2016

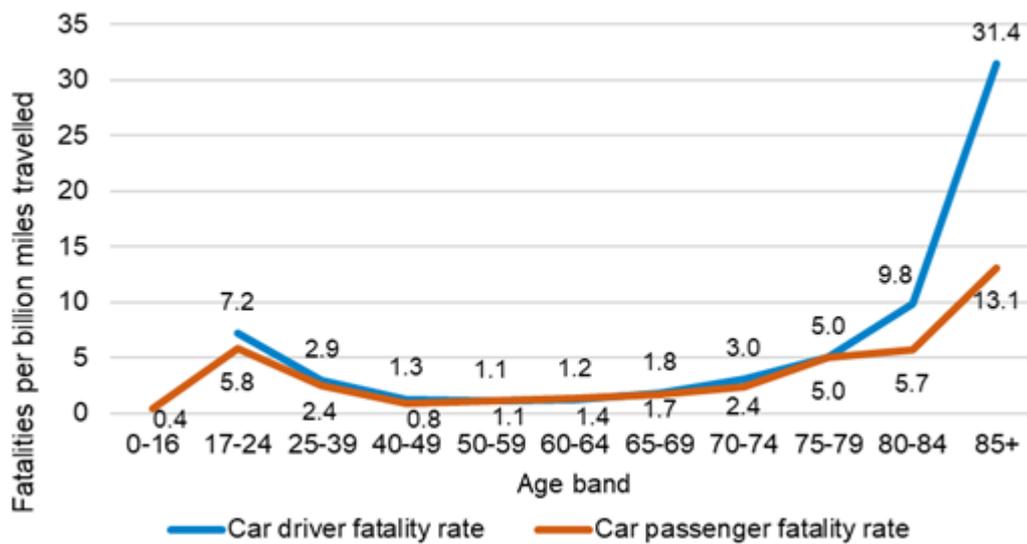


Source: National Travel Survey and DfT Stats19

⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706516/young-car-drivers-factsheet.pdf

When accounting for distance travelled, the fatality rate for young car drivers was higher than all age groups up to 80 years old in England in 2018, as shown in Figure 4.

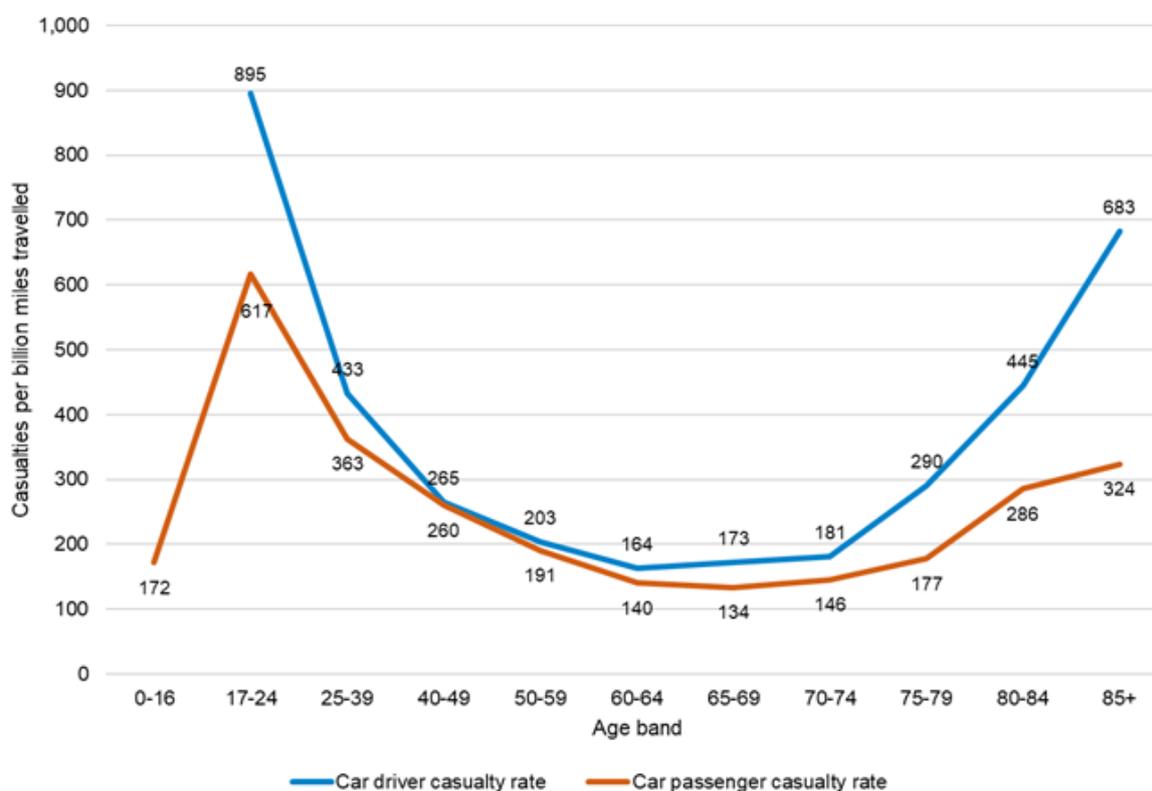
Figure 4 Car/van occupant fatalities per billion miles travelled by age of driver (2018 casualty data, England only)



Source DfT Stats 19

As shown in Figure 5, in 2018 the casualty rate for young car/van drivers per billion miles travelled in England was more than three times higher than car drivers aged 40-75.

Figure 5 Car/van occupant casualties per billion miles travelled by age of driver (2018 casualty data, England only)

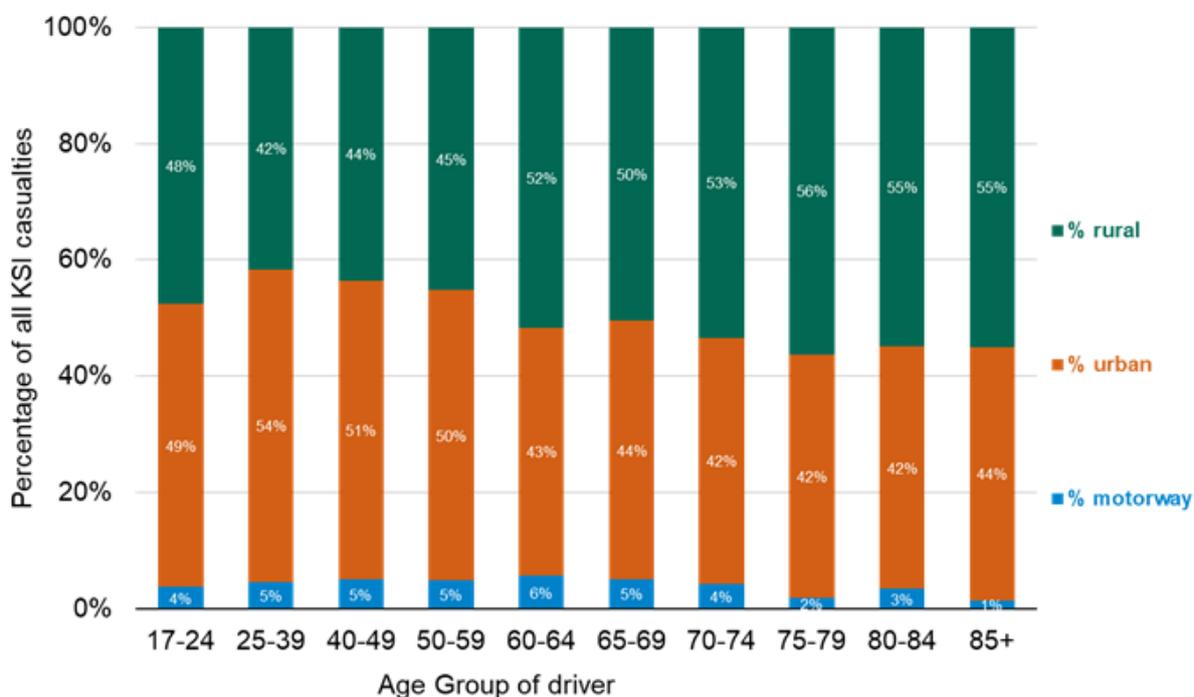


Source: DfT Stats 19 and the National Travel Survey

The factors affecting young drivers' road performance/behaviours:

Figure 6 (on the following page) shows the road types where people are killed or seriously injured (KSI) in an accident involving a car driver, by the age of the driver. The majority of KSI casualties involving young drivers occur on rural roads – a larger proportion than for KSI casualties involving car drivers aged between 25 and 60.

Figure 6 KSI casualties in collisions involving a car driver, by road type and age of driver in GB (2018 data)

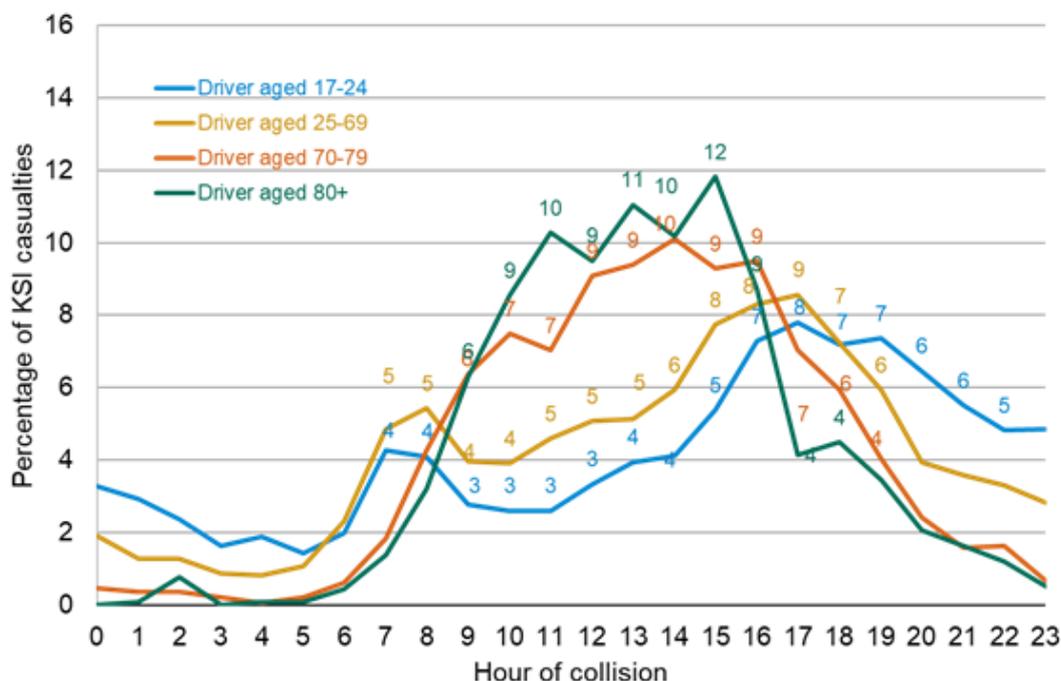


Source: DfT Stats 19⁶

Time of day is also a factor in accidents involving young car drivers. Figure 7 shows the time of day when people are killed or seriously injured (KSI) in an accident involving a car driver, by the age of the driver. The riskiest times for people killed or seriously injured in collisions involving young car drivers compared to other aged drivers are during the evening through to the early morning (from 6pm to 5am). This does not consider differences in distance travelled by time of day and age of driver.

⁶https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820562/Reported_road_casualties_-_Main_Results_2018.pdf

Figure 7 Percentage of KSI casualties in collisions involving a car driver by hour of collision, GB, 2018



Source: DfT Stats 19

When a road traffic accident is recorded by the police, they can select up to six factors they believe contributed to the accident. These factors include options such as 'road environment', 'vehicle defects', 'driver/rider error or reaction', 'inexperience', 'vision affected by', 'impairment', 'pedestrian' involvement and many others.

Contributory factors are designed to give the key actions and failures that led directly to the actual impact to aid investigation of how accidents might be prevented. Please note that this does not assign blame for the accident to any specific road user, but gives an indication of which factors the attending officer thought contributed to the accident. Officers do not need to carry out a full investigation of the incident before allocating contributory factors; they usually use professional judgement about what they can see at the scene.

When compared with all other adult car drivers, a larger proportion of young car drivers are allocated factors relating to 'driver careless, reckless or in a hurry', 'loss of control', 'learner or inexperienced driver' and those 'relating to speed'⁷.

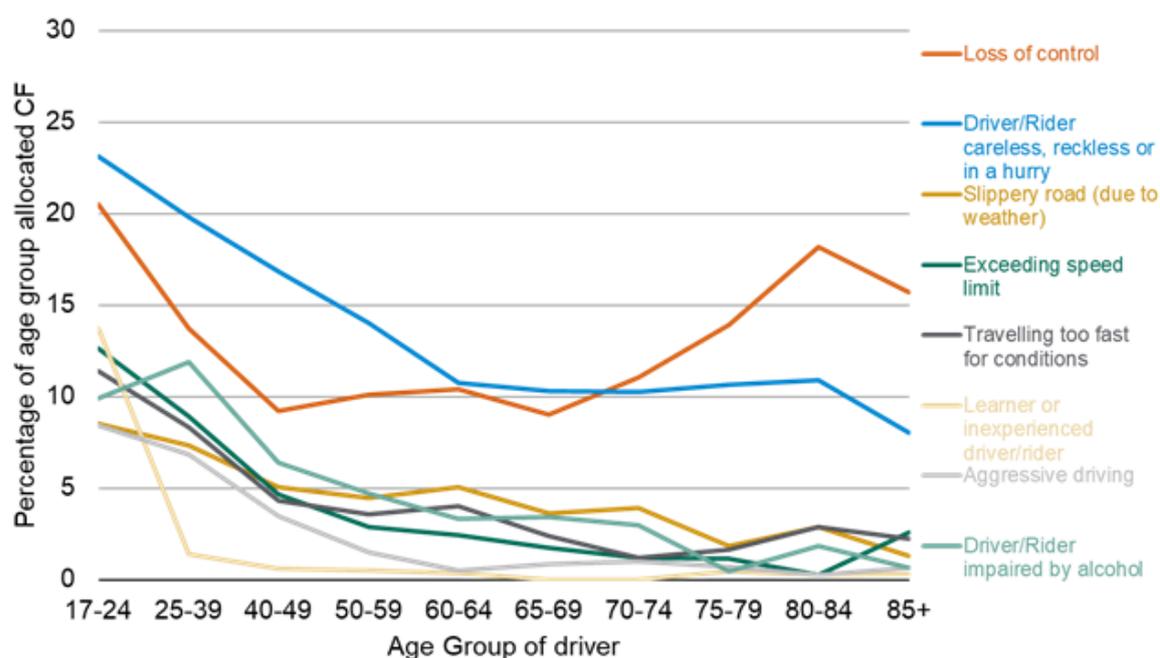
Figure 8 shows that the likelihood of being allocated factors such as 'loss of control', 'inexperience' and 'careless, reckless or in a hurry' for fatal and serious collisions is highest for young drivers aged 17-24 and drops by age. This reflects the research

⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706516/young-car-drivers-factsheet.pdf

which shows that the increased risk faced by young drivers is related to a combination of age and inexperience⁸. It also shows that a larger proportion of young drivers are allocated contributory factors such as 'impaired by alcohol', 'exceeding speed limit', 'travelling too fast for conditions' and 'aggressive driving'.

As contributory factors are based on the judgement of police officers, some of the findings might reflect preconceptions of officers. For instance, they may be more likely to allocate the factor of inexperience to a younger driver than an older driver.

Figure 8 Percentage of fatal or serious collisions (with a CF) with each contributory factor allocated to the car, by age of driver, GB, 2018



Source: DfT Stats 19

Travel behaviour of young and novice drivers

In July 2019, the Department published a data set as part of their National Travel Surveys (NTS0201) on full driving licence holders by age and gender⁹. The data showed that between 1992/94 and 2017, male ownership of a full driving licence amongst 17-20-year olds reduced from 55% to 29%, and increased to 37% in 2018. Female ownership of a full driving licence amongst 17-20-year olds started an

⁸ See https://www.roadsafety-dss.eu/assets/data/pdf/synopses/Lack_of_driving_experience_032018.pdf; <https://trl.co.uk/sites/default/files/PPR673.pdf> and <http://www.roadsafetyobservatory.com/Review/10043>

⁹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/821409/nts0201.ods

increasing trend from 2004, however began decreasing again in 2009. This decrease continued to a low in 2014 but started increasing again in 2016.

The Department also published a data set (NTS0203) on reasons why individuals of both genders and ages are not learning to drive¹⁰. In 2018, 46% of young drivers aged 17-20 did not learn to drive due to the costs of learning. The cost of learning is the largest factor for not obtaining a licence for age groups 17-20 and 21-29 in 2018. The cost of learning was also the leading factor in previous years for these age groups, followed by the cost of buying a car and the cost of insurances.

Independent analysis of the data from the National Travel Surveys from 2002-2014, the Census (2001 and 2011) and Understanding Society (five waves from 2009/10 to 2013/14) found that young drivers who learn later in life also drive fewer miles per year than people who acquire a license early. Changes in young people's socio economic and living situations can contribute to the rise in less young people driving. Increased participation in higher education, the rise of urbanisation and improved public transport, the rise of living costs and changes in the labour market may have all been effective in shaping young driver's travel behaviour¹¹.

Conclusion

Statistics collected over the years continue to show the same recurring information; young drivers and riders (17-24-years old) are persistently at a high risk of accident on roads, not only in the UK but globally, however casualties in this group are still falling.

In view of this, and taking into account previous campaigns and interventions, we continue to target young drivers and riders especially males.

The Department continues to work, alongside its stakeholders, researching and implementing interventions to target young and novice drivers to solve this well documented issue.

The Department's work on interventions for Young Drivers:

- **Driver 2020**

The Driver 2020 project being led by the Transport Research Laboratory, is testing five non-legislative, technological and educational based measures that may improve the road safety of young and novice drivers.

¹⁰https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/821402/nts0203.ods

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-peoples-travel-whats-changed-and-why>

There is a lack of robust evidence around the effectiveness of these type of voluntary interventions on reducing young driver collision risk and hence the Government commissioned the £2m project to meet this evidence gap.

The project is trialing the interventions with 25,000 volunteer participants aged between 17 and 24-year olds and is due to conclude and report back in 2021¹².

Three of the interventions being tested focus on the learning period, they are:

- An app-based intervention designed to increase the amount and breadth of pre-test on-road experience
- An intervention to train hazard perception skill (delivered through e-learning)
- A classroom-based educational intervention

Two of the interventions focus on new novice drivers, so the period immediately after test past. They are:

- An intervention utilising a mobile phone app to provide feedback to drivers on their driving style. This does not involve fitting black boxes into participants cars as it uses mobile technology.
- An intervention to engage parents or mentors in managing post-test driving in specific risky situations (such as driving after dark, and while carrying peer-age passengers) using web-based materials

Evidence suggests that four of these interventions (all but the classroom-based education intervention) have the potential to reduce young novice driver collision risk, as outlined in a report that we published in August 2017¹³.

There is less evidence around the effectiveness of a classroom-based education intervention. However, many of these classroom-based educational approaches currently in operation, both in the UK and around the world, are not based on proven behaviour change theory. This may be the reason why such approaches have not had any effect on reducing young driver collision risk so far.

The evidence suggests that incorporating elements based on behaviour change theory into educational road safety interventions may increase the likelihood of their efficacy. The educational intervention being trialled in Driver 2020 includes these elements. It is based on proven behaviour change theory and does not draw on fear or threat messages which have shown to be ineffective in improving young driver safety.

¹² <https://driver2020.co.uk/>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-interventions-to-increase-the-safety-of-young-and-novice-drivers>

- **Current framework for testing for new drivers**

The Driver and Vehicles Standards Agency's (DVSA) 5-year strategy, "Helping you stay safe on Britain's Roads", includes actions to ensure that new drivers are better prepared for a lifetime of safe driving and have access to guidance, advice and training that helps to keep them safe.

A key focus has been on improving young people's appreciation that safe and responsible driving is about much more than vehicle control and encouraging new drivers to obtain the right quantity and type of experience during the learning process.

Based on learning outcomes, DVSA's national standards set out the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to be safe and responsible drivers. In this context, safe means interacting with other road users, negotiating junctions, roundabouts, crossings etc. in compliance with the law and not putting self or others at risk. Responsible means making decisions about the impact of what you are doing and maintaining competence throughout your driving career.

Most young people continue to invest in the skills of a professional driving instructor. If the Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) makes all the decisions during the learning to drive process, then the learner will gain little useful experience of making the decisions they are going to have to make when driving unsupervised after the test. DVSA's corresponding national standards for delivering effective training require ADIs to teach more than the mechanics of driving. Through a client centred approach to training, ADIs are encouraging learners to take greater responsibility for their own learning and to think for themselves. DVSA have introduced a series of changes to the ADI testing processes to reflect this broader approach to training.

Learner drivers can now benefit from motorway lessons whilst under the supervision of their experienced ADI. As detailed in the Road Safety Statement, the aim of this recent policy is to boost skills and confidence in new drivers on our motorway network in their crucial post test period, a period where they are still learning whilst driving unsupervised¹⁴.

DVSA are currently developing a behavioural change campaign aimed at encouraging learners to further broaden the range of roads they practice and learn on. The overarching objective for this campaign is to increase the amount of practice learners have on rural roads, driving independently and driving in the dark before they take their test for the first time.

This builds on the changes made to the practical driving test in December 2017¹⁵. The independent driving section, where the candidate must drive for 20 minutes without detailed guidance by the examiner, provides more relevant 'real world'

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-statement-2019-a-lifetime-of-road-safety>

¹⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/640646/transforming-the-practical-driving-test-research-report.pdf

situations for the assessment of a candidate's ability to manage the vehicle, route and traffic simultaneously. The new test means that they spend less time on minor roads for manoeuvres enabling test routes to focus on high risk areas, such as rural and higher speed roads, where collisions occur. It also means that the candidate has more exposure to busier roundabouts and junctions to improve observation, and varying traffic situations to improve their judgement. Use of satellite navigation and the demonstration of controls on the move also help candidates to manage distractions¹⁶.

DVSA also continues to develop the theory test, notably through use of Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI) in the Hazard Perception Test. Providing an opportunity to create high risk situations that the Agency could not film safely, CGI has introduced a wider range of clips into the test featuring vulnerable road users, night-time or adverse weather conditions. Planned future transformation will see DVSA create and manage a new digital platform, giving them greater control over other key areas of functionality such as the test engine. This will better enable DVSA to support future road safety priorities by providing greater flexibility to readily adapt to changing content, methodology and technology. It will also allow some of the theory test content to be used across a wider range of media and platforms, providing opportunities for other drivers and road users to benefit from this transformation.

Last year DVSA published an updated version of its official Learning to Drive publication, bringing together all of the above. It is accompanied by a refreshed, and digital, Drivers Record. This will allow the learner, their ADI and any other supervising driver, to better prepare training and monitor progress against the key learning outcomes of the national standards and their readiness to drive unsupervised on a range of roads and in different circumstances. The drivers record will do this through the learners on-road experience and post lesson reflection.

The Theory test is the largest high-stakes (i.e. the result is of value) online test in the world with over 2 million car and 80,000 motorcycle theory tests taken in 2017/18.

- **Enforcement**

The Department put in place the New Drivers Act where novice drivers can risk losing their licence in their first year of qualifying, if they accrue 6 points on their licence¹⁷. The act also applies to learner drivers as any valid penalty points that are accrued on their provisional driving licence will be carried over to their full licence when they pass their driving test. This is in part recognition of connecting factors between young drivers and inappropriate/illegal driving behaviours.

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/driving-test-changes-4-december-2017>

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/penalty-points-endorsements/new-drivers>

- **Education and raising awareness**

The THINK! team¹⁸, help to develop and deliver road safety campaigns and to regularly and actively engage with young and novice drivers.

In March 2019, THINK! ran a campaign directly targeting new drivers “The Road Whisperer” campaign¹⁹. As 1 in 5 drivers crash within the first year after their test, this campaign is aimed at young drivers who feel vulnerable on the road and may take risks on the road to over compensate for their inexperience.

Through the character of the Road Whisperer, who shared wisdom with young drivers about challenging situations like driving at night or on country roads, the campaign communicated the message that it takes time to learn the ways of the road. The campaign ran on channels that are especially popular with young men including social, Video-on-Demand and cinema, as well as an extended partnership with LADbible, maximising the popularity of the brand to extend credibility, reach and engagement.

The campaign offered tips on driving in often challenging circumstances like; night driving, in weather conditions, checking tyres, using rural roads and motorways and being mindful of other road users.

Following the campaign:

- The number of 17-24-year-old new drivers who agreed they would take risks when in high-pressured driving situations fell by 5 percentage points.
- Two-in-five 17-24-year-olds reported the campaign made them feel more confident when driving.
- More than a third of 17-24-year-old new driver reported taking direct action as a result, including talking to friends and family about driving, and driving differently to usual.
- Following the campaign, total trust in the THINK! brand among young men increased by 13 percentage points over six months.

The overarching THINK! “Mates Matter”²⁰, strategy focuses our resources on individuals and issues that are over represented in road casualties. Young novice drivers in particular are most at risk in the first six months after passing their test – as they build experience, their risk reduces. Priority issues include speeding, the use of mobile phones while driving, drink driving and the party car phenomenon (the distraction of having friends in the car).

The strategy, which looks to influence individual driving behaviour by shifting group norms among friendship groups, is designed to redefine the masculine view of what it means to be a ‘good driver’. It focuses on the role that mates play in setting the

¹⁸ <https://www.think.gov.uk/>

¹⁹ <https://www.think.gov.uk/campaign/road-whisperer/>

²⁰ <https://www.think.gov.uk/campaign/a-mate-doesnt-let-a-mate-drive/>

driving standards for issues such as speeding, and in empowering mates to have each other's backs, for example to stop them from drink driving.

Through using the channels that over-index with young men and working with media partners such as LADbible and Snapchat, and brand partners including the County FA and Heineken, the strategy aims to engage our young male audience via the channels, moments and trusted voices that are most relevant to them.

The strategy began with the 2017 Christmas drink drive campaign, which resulted in the most significant attitudinal shift towards drink driving among young men in over a decade.

The strategy continues to target young male drivers aged 17-24, with recent activity focusing on the issues of drink and the party car. This will be followed by activity in 2020/21 aimed at challenging masculine perceptions of what it means to be a good driver – perceptions which can encourage or endorse risky driving behaviours such as speeding. The activity will address the issues of speeding, country roads, mobile phone use and seatbelt use.

The THINK! team is also in conversation with the DVSA about extending the New Driver campaign to engage both learner and novice drivers, and will be reviewing the THINK child and teen strategy to engage young people via resources for schools.

THINK! campaign impact is regularly tracked and developed through independent evaluation, with measures including campaign and brand awareness, attitudinal shifts and claimed behaviour change.

Further Departmental actions from the Road Safety Statement²¹:

The Road Safety Statement (RSS) published on 19 July contains a list of 74 actions that the Department will be pursuing as part of our commitment to improving road safety over the next two years.

As we outlined earlier, young driver incidents and fatalities on rural roads in Great Britain are high. The Department will be setting up a Rural Roads Working Group to discuss issues regarding rural road safety with informed stakeholders and involved parties on road safety. The aim of this group is for those who are affected by rural road issues, including the young driving community, to openly discuss road safety matters directly with the Department. Issues to be discussed might include rural safety enforcement, rural speeding, improvements to rural roads and signage, engagement with local communities.

The following actions are aimed directly at young and novice drivers:

- Evaluation of the THINK! Campaigns on influencing attitudes of young drivers.

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-statement-2019-a-lifetime-of-road-safety>

- Working closely with THINK! On providing targeted safety communication materials to new drivers and their families.
- Refreshing the DVSA's guidance to help Advanced Driving Instructors (ADIs) conduct mock tests.
- Ensure that practical driving test routes allow assessment of the candidate's abilities to drive safely and responsibly in a range of road and traffic situations.
- Reviewing DVSA's national standards to ensure they continue to reflect current evidence of what is required of safer and responsible drivers and riders.
- Working with DVSA to improve consumer awareness and participation by increasing the number of road safety initiatives, education and training interventions it recognises.
- Continuing to keep the driving test up to date with technological changes.

Final conclusions:

As discussed in the first section the road casualty statistics have shown the continuing trend of young male drivers being the most high-risk casualty group.

In response to this evidence, the Department has announced Young Road Users (which includes young drivers) as one of its four priority road user groups alongside Rural Road Users, Motorcyclists and Older (Vulnerable) Road Users. The Road Safety Statement describes the actions for these groups and other road safety interventions - the work the Department will undertake over the next two years in preparation for a longer-term strategy.

The Department's ongoing and planned research programme to improve the road safety of young drivers, from the Driver 2020 programme and the possible technological interventions it looks at, to targeted educational messaging, is intended to underpin any future policy decisions and the direction of the future long-term road safety strategy. The broad aim is to improve road safety for children and young people through new technology and research; and developing better learning opportunities and messaging for young drivers.

March 2020