



Department for Transport

Huw Merriman MP
Chairman of the Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Baroness Vere of Norbiton
Minister for Roads, Buses and Places

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: baroness.vere@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

13 November 2020

Dear Huw,

At the recent Transport Select Committee on Young and Novice Drivers, yourself and members of the Committee asked a number of questions of the Department for Transport. Please find the answers listed below.

Question: Is the Department conducting research on young male development?

At the Department for Transport we acknowledge that in terms of population and in the number of miles driven, 17-24 year olds, especially males, remain as one of the highest fatality risk groups in Great Britain.

The Department for Transport is not however pursuing any research into male physical or mental development. Research projects are being conducted by the Department and its stakeholders that target young male drivers, but they focus on a socio-economic approach rather than physiological differences.

Through our THINK! Team, the Department does tailor educational messaging at young males and their road use behaviours. THINK! have ongoing insight work focused on young male attitudes, their social norms and behaviours through both quantitative and qualitative research. This has included regular attitude tracking in relation to risky road behaviours and in-depth ethnographic research with groups of young male friends to understand the influence of social norms on their driving behaviours.

Question: What assessments have been made of the effectiveness of the THINK! campaign's Party Car initiative in reaching and educating young people on the risks of mobile phone use while driving?

Research has shown that speeding increases significantly among teenage male drivers when accompanied by a male teenage passenger, and young drivers are more likely to crash with passengers in the car.

The [Party Car campaign](#) focused on the role of passengers in driver distraction. The campaign targeted young males aged 17-24 with a simple message – don't distract your mate while he's driving. Three short videos (shot in vertical format to optimise for channels such as Snapchat and Instagram Stories) and three radio ads each addressed one of the three distracting behaviours: mates messing around, changing music and distracting the driver with a mobile phone.

The videos had more than 5 million views among the target audience across social media, online video and gaming apps, and the radio ads achieved almost 15 million impressions via channels including Spotify and Kiss FM.

A media partnership with LADbible to support the campaign reached 6.1 million people and generated more than 57,000 engagements.

As a result of seeing the campaign, 67% of young males claimed they would be more likely to tell a friend not to distract them while driving, and 63% claimed they would be less likely to distract the driver.

Following the campaign there was an increase in agreement among 17-24 year old men that 'it's dangerous to distract the driver' and an increase in agreement among 17-24 year old men that 'when I'm a passenger I make an effort not to distract the driver.'

Question: What data does the Department collect on the number of older novice drivers (drivers over 25 who have less than three years driving experience) involved in road traffic collisions and how does this data feed into the Department's road safety policy making?

The Department for Transport does not collect statistics on crashes within the first year of driving for this group. When it comes to collisions in the first year of driving, Novice Driver information is not one of the routine factors collected through Stats19. This type of information would only be available to us through in-depth studies of the group, such as Driver 2020 for young Novice Drivers.

My officials have contacted the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) who have also confirmed that they do not hold any official collision data on this road user group.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) may be able to draw some analysis for this group from their driver records, such as penalty points and

disqualifications, which may be able to give us more information on the driver's behaviour.

I can however confirm the following latest statistics for all drivers in that group.

Drivers aged 17-24 account for 7% of the UK's full driving licence holders. Drivers aged 17-24 are involved in 23% of fatal and serious collisions in Great Britain in 2019.

Drivers aged 25-34 account for 16% of the UK's full driving licence holders. Drivers aged 25-34 are involved in 32% of fatal and serious collisions in Great Britain in 2019.

In 2019, there were 40,938 reported road accidents involving a driver aged 25-34 in Great Britain.

The population of those aged 25-34 in Great Britain in 2019 was 8,762,295 and the number of full-driving licences of those aged 25-34 is 6,477,461.

Question: What proportion of full licence holders are over-75 and what proportion of fatal and serious collisions is this demographic involved in?

Older Road Users are one of the Department for Transport's four priority areas for road safety, as set out in the Road Safety Statement published in July 2019. Whilst the number of young road user deaths has fallen over the past ten years, fatalities for all age groups over 60 (60 to 69, 70 to 79, 80 and more) have increased since 2009.

The population of the UK is ageing fast. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak projections indicated that by 2040 around 1 in 4 people will be aged 65 or older in the UK.

In December 2019 there were 41,080,771 full driving licence holders in the UK, of which 3,074,220 (7.5%) are 75 or older.

During 2019 there were 24,634 fatal or serious accidents that involved a driver or motorcyclist (this excludes accidents that only involve pedestrians or pedal cyclists). Of these, 1,817 (7.4%) involved a driver or motorcyclist aged 75 or over.

Topic raised by Robert Largan MP: Hill Starts conducted during the practical driving test

The hill start is included within the driving test as a test requirement, but not as a legal requirement. This is due to a hill not necessarily being available on every test route at every test centre. If a hill start cannot be conducted, then a further designated stop is carried out so that all tests contain a consistent

number of required stops.

Despite this, the vast majority of tests in Great Britain will include a hill start. As testing influences training, and there is a very strong possibility that a hill start will be conducted on a test, this will ensure that hill start training is delivered during driving lessons.

I hope the information above answers any queries you or the Committee may have had on Young and Novice Drivers.

Yours,
Charlotte

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON