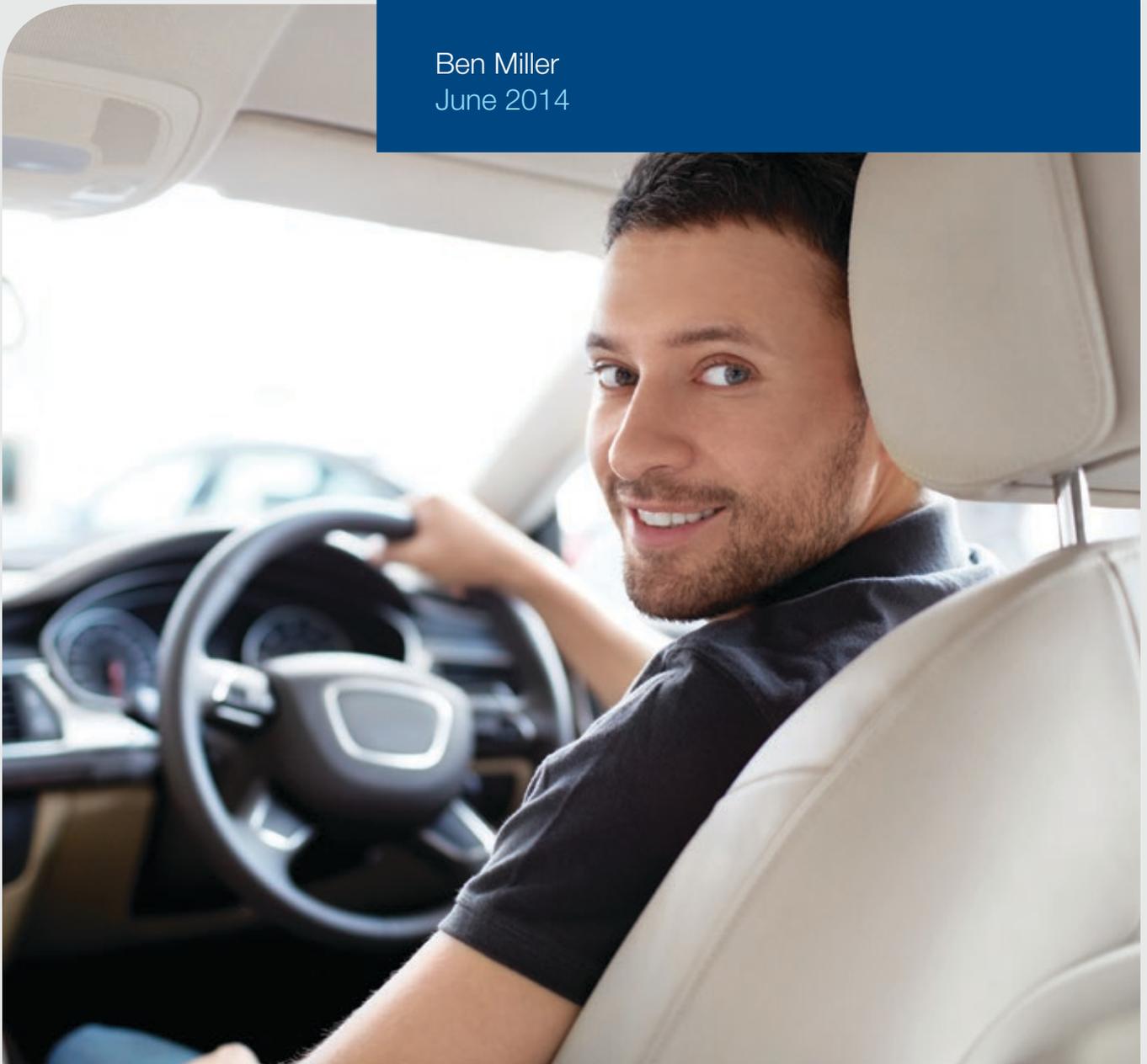




RAC
Foundation

Views on Graduated Driver Licensing

Ben Miller
June 2014



The Royal Automobile Club Foundation for Motoring Ltd is a transport policy and research organisation which explores the economic, mobility, safety and environmental issues relating to roads and their users. The Foundation publishes independent and authoritative research with which it promotes informed debate and advocates policy in the interest of the responsible motorist.

RAC Foundation

89–91 Pall Mall

London

SW1Y 5HS

Tel no: 020 7747 3445

www.racfoundation.org

Registered Charity No. 1002705

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1. Introduction

A disproportionate number of young people (aged 17 to 24) are killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads.



- One in five new drivers will have a collision within the first six months of driving.
- Of the fatalities on Great Britain's roads in 2011, 22% occurred in collisions involving a driver aged 17 to 24. In 65% of these collisions, the fatal injuries were sustained by passengers or road users other than the young driver.
- Those aged 15 to 24 are four times more likely to die from a road accident than from drug, alcohol or other substance poisoning combined.
- Young drivers (24 years old and under) make up 25% of all those drivers killed or seriously injured on the road network, but account for only 8% of licence holders. They also drive, on average, less than half as far as those aged 25 and over. Young drivers are therefore at significantly greater risk for every mile travelled by car.
- Road deaths account for 0.5% of all deaths in Britain, but 25% of deaths among 15- to 19-year-olds.
- The over-representation of young novice drivers in road injury statistics is therefore a public health risk in Great Britain.

The key contributory factors to this problem are known, and are cross-cultural: they are youth and inexperience.

1.1 When are young drivers most at risk?

Young drivers are especially at risk in particular circumstances, notably when they are:

- driving at night, or over the weekend;
- driving on rural roads;
- negotiating bends (rather than junctions);
- driving with passengers;
- being impaired by alcohol or drugs.

The RAC Foundation believes that the current learning-to-drive training, testing and licensing regime is not doing enough to prepare our nation's young people for solo driving. Reform is needed.

One solution is **graduated driver licensing (GDL)**, which involves a staged exposure to risk for newly qualified drivers while they build up experience. GDL schemes typically include rules about night-time driving, passenger restrictions, lower alcohol limits and vehicle power limits – the driver restrictions are based on particularly important risk factors for younger drivers.

GDL is used by a growing number of driving licence jurisdictions to reduce novice driver exposure to risk, resulting in marked young driver casualty reductions. International research on a range of GDL schemes has found that fatal collisions among the vulnerable age groups studied have reduced by between 9% and 60%, and that overall casualties for these same groups have fallen by anything from 5% to 32%.

1.2 Political background – legislation

On 25 March 2013 the UK government announced that it would publish a Green Paper setting out proposed measures to lower the number of young people killed on British roads.¹ It was initially due to be published in spring 2013, but it has repeatedly been delayed.²

In January 2014 ministers announced that the policy document had been put on hold indefinitely, admitting that they were still “wrestling with the issues” and would only issue a paper “when we have considered this further”.³

1 www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-overhaul-young-driver-rules-in-bid-to-improve-safety-and-cut-insurance-costs

2 www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/10123411/Ministers-urged-to-speed-up-a-crackdown-on-young-drivers.html

3 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm131218/text/131218w0001.htm

1.3 This report

This report contains a range of views on GDL from various organisations which have a stake in safer roads and safer driving, or could be affected by GDL.

The views were initially gathered during a fact-finding exercise carried out in March 2014 by the RAC Foundation, to better understand where GDL is supported and where it is not. The people quoted here are those who have agreed that their comments can be made public. There are several organisations which were very candid with the Foundation regarding their opinion of GDL but which did not wish to be quoted.

What follows is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all the pros and cons of a GDL system, nor do we claim to have spoken – on or off the record – to everyone who has an interest in this subject, but we hope that this report will add to the debate on the important matter of young driver safety.

The views that follow are broken down by various GDL topic areas.



2. Young Drivers and GDL: the Politics

2.1 The lack of a Green Paper

A number of politicians and organisations expressed disappointment that GDL had not been introduced.



Richard Burden MP, the Labour Party's shadow transport minister, said:

“We have continued to publicly criticise the government for failing to tackle the issue of young driver safety, which is a priority in the Department for Transport's (DfT's) safety strategy and for public health. Ministers first promised a Green Paper on young driver safety in spring 2013, then by Christmas – and now the government won't even commit to a timetable for publication for 2014.”

Executive director of the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety's (PACTS), David Davies, said:

“We're very disappointed and angry there's no Green Paper. We're not going change government's mind: they're not going to do anything in next 12 months. We're now working to influence a future government.”

A Transport for London (TfL) statement noted:

“Sir Peter Hendy [Commissioner of TfL] has recently written to the Secretary of State to express his disappointment that DfT does not appear to be acting with ambition and urgency on the topic of young driver safety, and his surprise at the delays in publishing the young driver Green Paper. TfL would support a campaign encouraging the government to publish the Green Paper on young driver safety and to include in it the full range of options for GDL.”

Scotland's transport minister, Keith Brown, said:

“I'm calling for the UK government to take action on GDL without further delay... Should UK Ministers ultimately decide not to move forward on this issue, I would ask again that they devolve the necessary powers to Scottish ministers.”

The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM)'s director of policy and research, Neil Greig, said:

“We hoped to be looking at a government White Paper now. It's not likely to happen. The government do not seem to be moving on anything. It was supposed to be a capacity issue. Apparently the Coalition's focus is on economy and jobs, and it's believed GDL will add to costs and impact on jobs. Road safety versus economic effects.”

Direct Line Group noted in a statement:

“We held breakfast events in Westminster for the last two years on the issue of young drivers. We had involvement from DfT, and so when the Green Paper didn't come out we were very disappointed. We've been pressing for a re-examination of the issues with the new Roads Minister Robert Goodwill and his shadow, Richard Burden since.”

The Association of British Insurers' motor policy advisor, Scott Pendry, said:

“The insurance industry has long campaigned for reform to the way young people learn to drive. It's disappointing that the government has consistently failed to grasp the nettle and introduce the meaningful reform that is urgently needed to ensure that fewer young people are killed and injured on our roads, and that motor insurance becomes affordable.”



2.2 Access to employment and education

Expressing concern about how GDL could affect employment and education, **Richard Burden MP** said:

“GDL offers a package of interventions to improve young driver safety, and some of them – such as bans on night-time driving and transporting passenger – are problematic. Labour does not want to isolate young people by cutting off access to education and employment for the nearly one million young people who are unemployed, particularly in rural areas and other places with poor transport.”

Kevin Clinton, head of road safety, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), said:

“A GDL scheme for Britain would need to be carefully designed to ensure that it did not unfairly restrict access to employment and education, and the issue of how the police could enforce any restrictions would need to be resolved.”

A statement from the Trades Union Congress (TUC) said:

“We would want to consult widely on any proposals, but there is no doubt at all that our high priority should be to cut down deaths on the road. Given our key focus on employment, safety, and life at work, we would be most likely to favour proposals that would improve young people’s driving safety without decreasing their ability to drive to work.”

Liberal Democrat MP, Lynne Featherstone, noted that her main concern is ensuring that any measures introduced on the road to improve safety are possible and practical; and with the various measures that fall under GDL – such as alcohol limits, curfews and passenger limitations – her feeling is that there would be difficulties in implementation.

John Lepine MBE, general manager of the Motor Schools Association of Great Britain (MSA), said:

“It also seems that a lot of MPs, particularly from rural constituencies, would not support GDL because of the effect on young people’s personal mobility. It would make it more difficult and more expensive for young people to be mobile.”

Paul Caddick, managing editor of adiNEWS magazine (a monthly magazine for driving instructors), said:

“No one in the government wants to cost the taxpayer more money – that’s why governments of all persuasion consistently shy away from actually addressing the real issues, and GDL keeps being kicked into touch.”

2.3 Support for GDL

The Greater London Authority principal policy officer for transport, Kat McKinlay, said:

“The Mayor has set an ambitious target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on London’s roads by 40% by 2020, and this includes tackling young driver safety. We are supportive of initiatives that would make new and young drivers safer on our roads, and this could include improvements to young driver learning and licensing such as GDL.”

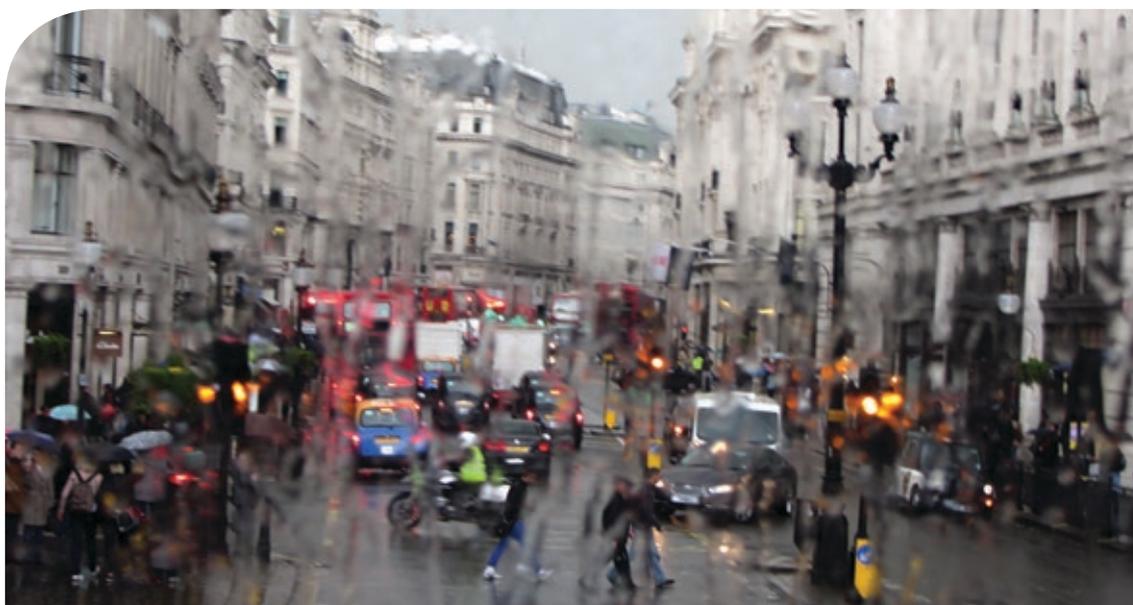
A TfL spokesperson said it supports GDL as well as educational programmes, adding:

“There are, however, few interventions with the potential to prevent as many deaths and injuries as GDL. TfL would be supportive of aspects of GDL which are considered most effective in international evidence:

- a minimum learning period before being allowed to take the practical driving test at age 18;
- post-test restrictions on carrying peer passengers and driving at night.”

Scotland’s transport minister, Keith Brown, said:

“The evidence base shows that GDL remains the only young driver intervention for which there is clear and unambiguous evidence that it reduces the crash rate for new and young drivers. We need to make sure that any proposed GDL scheme supports young and novice drivers, both in terms of safety and in reduced insurance premiums.”



PACTS executive director, David Davies, emphasised the importance of gathering different people's and organisations attitudes toward GDL. He stated:

“We believe in evidence-based policy measures. This [GDL] will reduce casualties.”

A report⁴ on GDL, commissioned by the DfT from the UK's Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), notes:

“In short, the case for implementing a strong GDL system to reduce novice driver collisions and associated casualties in Great Britain is compelling... Based on the evidence reviewed and the analyses conducted in this study, we believe that there is a compelling case for an overhaul of driver licensing in Great Britain... The evidence reviewed in this report suggests that the comprehensive licensing system we are recommending would bring considerable casualty savings for young and novice drivers, their passengers, and all other road users in Great Britain.”

Louise Ellman MP, chair of the Commons Transport Select Committee, said:

“The scale of death and injuries experienced by young drivers is horrendous. It is time action was taken.”

2.4 Opposition to GDL

Scottish Liberal Democrat transport spokesperson, Tavish Scott MSP, in January 2013, criticised a Scottish National Party proposal for 17- to 25-year-olds to be subject to a driving curfew from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. every day, also preventing young drivers from carrying passengers in their vehicle. Mr Scott said:

“These proposals would mean any semblance of social life for young people in rural areas would be greatly restricted. Once you pass a driving test, irrespective of age, you are judged competent to drive, and with younger drivers the insurance market also adds to the cost by assessing risk to be greater. I do not support this proposal.”

4 Kinnear, N., Lloyd, L., Helman, S., Husband, P., Scoons, J., Jones, S., Stradling, S., McKenna, F. & Broughton J. (2013). *Novice Drivers: evidence review and evaluation: pre-driver education and training, graduated driver licensing, and the New Drivers Act. Project report PPR673*. Crowthorne: Transport Research Laboratory. Retrieved 16 May 2014 from www.trl.co.uk/reports-publications/report/?reportid=6844

Hannah Bettsworth, president of Edinburgh University Liberal Democrats, wrote in January 2013 that:

Proposals for restrictions on young drivers are based on a “Discriminatory assumption that young people are generally bad drivers... These plans are poorly targeted – basing the restrictions on age and not simply on all new drivers is ageist. As they stand, these proposals would seriously restrict the lives of young people living in rural areas with poor public transport links. Furthermore, young people would not be able to ‘car share’ if travelling long distances, possibly damaging the environment by putting more cars on the road with a single driver in them. In addition, these proposals would also exclude under-25s from jobs that required night driving, such as driving taxis or emergency vehicles.”



3. Young Drivers and GDL: Stakeholders' Views

3.1 Unfair

The DIAMOND Advanced Motorists' (DIA's) chief driving examiner, Mike Frisby, said:

“We’re not in favour of GDL – it’s restrictive to all new drivers despite them having gone through the learning process and gained the qualification. Four in five young people do not die, so why are we penalising the 80% in a society where we expect fairness? They are being penalised for entering an age group because of the minority that are getting it wrong. A small minority impacting such a massive change on the majority is unfair.”



Brian Gregory, a director of the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD), said:

“We do not believe in bans as a first-choice option – except in instances of patently reckless road user behaviour.”

Nicholas Rowley, chief executive officer of a2om international ltd, which provides brain training software for 16- to 24-year-olds, said:

“One in five young drivers crash within a year of passing their test. However, it also means that 80% of young drivers don’t have a crash. We need to consider that the majority of young people want to be responsible and demonstrate this behind the wheel of a car, and all they need is a guiding hand to be given the information necessary to make good choices. It seems to me this is a far easier nut to crack than changing the law, creating new areas of enforcement for the police to monitor and so on, when actually all we need to do is approach driving like an academic subject which gets studied and tested thoroughly over a set period of time.”

3.2 Telematics⁵

DIA's chief driving examiner, Mike Frisby, said:

“We’re looking at telematics, which we feel is a strong part of the solution, although in isolation is not the whole solution. Telematics can result in fatal incidents and put the driver in more risk. If you set a curfew it could cause them to rush to get home in time, increasing their risk. It needs to be part of a programme of development – in isolation, it may make them slow down, but it won’t necessarily make them better drivers.”

3.3 Education and learning

DIA's chief driving examiner, Mike Frisby, said people need to be educated from a very young age, and that must continue beyond the test.

Brian Gregory of the ABD agreed, saying:

“Young males do have disproportionate accident involvement rates. They get very bad press, but the methods currently used to try to modify their inappropriate and inadvisable behaviours are ineffective. The alternative is to change how observation, hazard awareness and response, and the accompanying thinking skills, are taught. If you approach males with right kind of course, you can kindle and retain their interest, and get more responsible drivers out at the end of the initial training process.”

Steve Haley from Skill Driver said:

“My preference is that the training and testing system stood up to the task of teaching all youngsters to drive properly, without the need to restrict them post-test.”

Paul Silverwood, trustee, the Under 17 Car Club Charitable Trust, said:

“Generally we will support anything that will bring a reduction in casualties. We believe education is the best way to achieve that, starting with youngsters in secondary school. The key thing is about attitudinal changes. Group discussions are so effective.”

⁵ Telematics, as applied to driving, refers to recording and transmission of information about the vehicle's location and speed, the style it is being driven in, and how long it has been on the road; it can be used to detect driving outside permitted hours.

Nicholas Rowley, chief executive officer of a2om international ltd, said:

“My position is that education is better than restriction, reward better than punishment. The ideal environment for safer young drivers is a much more defined curriculum to follow during the learning process, and a strong but supportive enforcement regime in the first few years post-licensing.”

Kevin Clinton, head of road safety, RoSPA, said:

“RoSPA supports a minimum learning period of one year, which should be linked to measures to ensure that good use is made of the learning period, such as some form of logbook to demonstrate that the learner gains driving experience in a specified range of situations (at night, in different weather conditions and on different types of roads) before they could take their driving test.”

Nicholas Rowley, chief executive officer of a2om international ltd, said:

“If GDL is about structured learning and proving you have done work on the key areas pre- and post-test – like bad-weather driving, appropriate speed choices, peer pressure, hazard perception and so on, like any subject taught to a curriculum in a school – then I support its introduction wholeheartedly.”

John Lepine MBE, general manager of MSA, said:

“The idea of 12-month learning period has been bandied about for many years, but would be very difficult to enforce. In addition, opportunities for learner drivers to practice are severely restricted.”

3.4 Experience is best

Paul Caddick, managing editor of adiNEWS magazine, said:

“Experience on the road is best thing – that’s what Swedish research has shown categorically. It would not cost any more money, and could dramatically change the social culture surrounding road use.”

This view is supported by **Brian Gregory of the ABD**, who said:

“Nor do we think night-time road use should be restricted according to the driver’s age. How else does one gain experience – except by driving under such conditions? We have all had to learn these skills. We believe that ever more onerous restrictions will merely make the learning process longer, more expensive and potentially even less effective.”

3.5 Night-time restrictions

Paul Caddick, managing editor of adiNEWS magazine, said that some parts of GDL are impractical, like the night-time driving curfew particularly, because of the reduction in traffic police enforcement.

“We need teens to be working, and often that ends up being in bars, restaurants and other employment that requires them to work odd hours, and often late at night. You cannot have restricted transport, and having special exemptions is unworkable – GDL in these cases is a problem that inhibits them from working.”

Paul Silverwood, trustee, the Under 17 Car Club Charitable Trust, said:

“I am uneasy about imposing time restrictions, especially for pub and restaurant workers for whom, by the time they’ve finished washing everything up, it can be after midnight.”

3.6 Passenger restrictions

IAM’s director of policy and research, Neil Greig, said:

“We support passenger controls – if you have restrictive passenger numbers you take away the risk. If [there is a] limited number of passengers, young people will be driving for a reason; this gives them a chance to gain experience. Accidents happen at the weekend [and] in the early hours, and so in some respects passenger limits could deal with that.”

Paul Silverwood, trustee, the Under 17 Car Club Charitable Trust, said:

“Having only one passenger could be a good influence, especially if they’re over 24. When you get lots of 17/18-year-olds, you’re more likely to have an accident. But why ban when you can educate? I’m not against GDL. Doing something is better than doing nothing, and that’s what government has been doing until now.”



3.7 Rural issues

The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) said in a statement that, while it can see the benefits of introducing road safety measures such as a GDL:

“[The Federation asks that] consideration is given to young people living in isolated rural areas. Due to a lack of public transport, rural young people rely on a car to get to their place of education or work. For those with jobs in agriculture, especially during peak seasons such as harvest, they may often be required to work outside of the suggested young driver curfew times of 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. With youth unemployment already at an all-time high, we ask government and local communities to ensure that our rural youth are not unfairly penalised by [these new measures], and that solutions are found for safe, night-time transportation.”

Speaking for **Family Lives, Chief Executive Jeremy Todd** said:

“The issues of passenger restriction would disproportionately affect rural communities.”

Iain Greenway, director of the road safety and vehicle regulation division of the Department of the Environment (DOE), Northern Ireland, said:

“There were people concerned about how it would affect rural communities. But you can show the amount of deaths in those rural communities. The figures are so striking: 17- to 24-year-old males are four times more likely to die on roads and six times more likely to be the cause of a death on the roads. Are you saying you can accept that? Is that where society is at? Driving is one of the most dangerous things we do. Would you accept these deaths for other things?”

3.8 Driving test: Not fit for purpose

Paul Silverwood, trustee, the Under 17 Car Club Charitable Trust, said:

“The current Driving Standards Agency test is not fit for purpose – it is fundamentally flawed. There’s no night-time driving, no motorway driving, no real rural roads driving – just testing in urban areas. Putting them through a syllabus of structured, highly specific driving, including country roads, will make them much safer.”

This was a view also expressed by **Neil Greig, IAM's director of policy and research**, who said:

“Currently the driving test is not fit for purpose. Young people get taught to pass the test; it does not involve 60 mph rural roads, and that’s an issue IAM has been talking about. The key for us is experience – 1,000 hours of experience. Research shows the importance of a wide range of experiences on a wide range of roads – that’s what’s important.”

Paul Caddick, managing editor of adiNEWS magazine, said new laws or regulations have to be “workable, practical and be implemented successfully to achieve the intended aims.” He noted that there are three main areas that are practical and realistic:

1. Changing the age at which you can start learning on the public road, whilst raising the age you can take the test, to encourage more on-the-road experience before driving solo after the test.
2. Telematics, which the government is edging towards. It is like semi-supervised driving and allows them [young people] to get that all-important experience on the public road – it is cheap and effective, and should make insurance cheaper while costing the taxpayer and government very little money. With telematics everything is tracked and there’s an incentive to drive better. What they have [insurance companies] shown is that driving quality has improved dramatically.
3. Improve the quality of teaching, which would include: proper road safety education consistently throughout school, from 5- to 18-year-olds; and better training and standards of instructor training for driving instructors, raising teaching standards, and making the whole area more professional.

DIA's chief driving examiner, Mike Frisby, said there is a deficiency in the ability of many road users – including drivers, motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists – to use the road safely. He said that the focus on young drivers is the tip of the iceberg and commented: “They are simply being brought into a system that’s broken.

“GDL will potentially create other problems. Of the 400/500 young people who die on the roads annually, 50% are uninsured drivers and many are unlicensed. By putting into place further restrictions those figures are likely to increase, resulting in more uninsured, unlicensed drivers dying.”

John Lepine MBE, general manager of MSA, said:

“We need more discussion about what we mean by GDL and what benefits might arise from it before we rush headlong into something that would push up the cost of learning to drive with few proven benefits. It’s very difficult to get change in this area – it’s not for want of trying. Too many get killed, but most do not – and it seems that’s acceptable to politicians.”

Kevin Clinton, head of road safety, RoSPA, said:

“Novice drivers are at higher risk than more experienced drivers, and the younger they are the higher the risk. A recent report has made a number of recommendations to improve the safety of new drivers and help prevent these tragedies, including a minimum learning period of one year in which learners would have to undertake a minimum amount of driving under a range of different circumstances. It also recommended imposing restrictions on night driving and carrying passengers for a period after the test. Evidence from other countries suggests that these measures can help to reduce young, novice driver accidents; however, there are questions about how it could be enforced and whether it might restrict access to employment and education.”

IAM’s director of policy and research, Neil Greig, said:

“The TRL report⁶ was a typical academic one. They want comprehensive GDL. We have issues with two specific areas. We think having no passengers under 30 for one year is unfeasible and unworkable in the real world. We’re against the night-time curfew for two reasons. One is the economic reason, because of work; and the other is that experience is important, and a curfew goes directly against that.”

Jeremy Todd, chief executive officer of Family Lives, said:

“We would support anything around [restrictions on] alcohol and drug driving.

“I’m not sure penalising young people driving at night and [having] no passengers is necessary. We would feel it would create additional burdens on families. There are issues around civil liberties. General public opinion is that people need to take responsibility for their actions. I would find it extraordinary if the public support it.

6 Kinnear, N., Lloyd, L., Helman, S., Husband, P., Scoons, J., Jones, S., Stradling, S., McKenna, F. & Broughton J. (2013). *Novice Drivers: evidence review and evaluation: pre-driver education and training, graduated driver licensing, and the New Drivers Act. Project report PPR673*. Crowthorne: Transport Research Laboratory. Retrieved 16 May 2014 from www.trl.co.uk/reports-publications/report/?reportid=6844

“I cannot see value in legislating in a draconian way, in tracking who they choose to go in a car. It’s prohibitive and problematic.”

Tam Baillie, Scotland’s commissioner for children and young people, stated:

“I broadly welcome measures which aim to ensure the safety of young drivers. However, further information and research is required before implementing recommendations relating to GDL, with respect to both prevalence and the potential impact on children and young people’s rights as identified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In particular, the potential for such a scheme to restrict the rights of children and young people that live in rural areas should be considered. I would strongly suggest that a Children’s Rights Impact Assessment is undertaken by the team considering the implications of implementing the recommendations so that the impact on children’s rights is fully understood. It should be noted that this issue is being considered in Scotland. In March 2014 the Scottish Parliament agreed a motion calling on UK ministers to develop and take forward proposals on GDL without delay. I look forward to further deliberations on how together we can make our roads a safe place for young drivers.”

Steve Latham, senior operations manager, the National Franchised Dealers Association, said:

“I have seen the [RAC Foundation’s GDL report⁷] and do not take on board everything that’s put forward. There’s definitely a need for better training, especially on motorways. There could be an opportunity for restriction of passenger and driving at night, but we wouldn’t support graduated training and testing.

“I have grave reservations with graduated testing. I do not want to burden young people with additional costs. Driving gives independence and we do not want to restrict young people from that.”

A statement from the National Union of Teachers said:

“[They] couldn’t see any reason why the Union wouldn’t support such a campaign.”

⁷ Box, E. & Wengraf, I. (2013). *Young Driver Safety: Solutions to an age-old problem*. London: RAC Foundation. Retrieved 16 May 2014 from www.racfoundation.org/assets/rac_foundation/content/downloadables/young_driver_safety-box_wengraf-july2013.pdf

4. Young Drivers and GDL: Emergency Services' Views

Martin Flaherty OBE, managing director of the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE), said:

“AACE would be supportive of any recommendations made to mitigate the risks involved for young drivers and reduce these statistics, particularly where the measures suggested are evidence-based and appropriately targeted.



“Reducing the rate of young driver incidents will not only reduce the number of casualties involved, with the associated trauma and often long-term effects for the individuals and their families, but will also have a wider impact, reducing the costs of such incidents, including those related to the emergency response, ongoing healthcare and insurance for all drivers. We look forward to seeing progress being made in this initiative, linked to the DfT proposed Green Paper on young driver safety.”

In a statement, **the Association of Chief Police Officers** noted:

“Young driver deaths can be prevented by reforming how they learn and establish themselves as safe drivers. International evidence demonstrates that pre- and post-test restrictions along with a minimum learning period dramatically reduce road death and injury. We welcome this government’s interest in young driver safety and are calling for all policy options to be included in any forthcoming Green Paper. We need a genuine public debate about what combination of changes has the best chance of making our roads safe for young people and everyone else.”

David Etheridge, the Chief Fire Officers’ Association (CFOA) national lead for road safety, stated:

“Fire and Rescue Services across the UK are still attending far too many avoidable road traffic collisions each year. CFOA endorses the recommendation to introduce GDL schemes, which have a proven track

record and have been very successful in reducing road deaths and injuries in other countries across the world. The introduction of legislation for these new schemes will ultimately benefit and support new and inexperienced drivers by adding in some restrictions, and make them safer in the early stages of their driving; this could lead to a reduction in some of the main causes of collisions that we encounter on our roads every day across the UK.”



5. Young Drivers and GDL: Local, European and International Experiences

A road traffic reform bill⁸, which includes an element of GDL, was introduced into the **Northern Ireland Assembly** in May 2014, and it should obtain Royal Assent in spring 2015. The most notable aspect of GDL in Northern Ireland is the introduction of passenger restrictions – a one-passenger maximum.



An extensive consultative process which involved key stakeholders including young people was carried out, incorporating a Learning to Drive Consultation⁹ in 2008 and in 2011 a Review of the Learner and Restricted Driver Schemes and Graduated Driver Licensing Consultation.¹⁰

Iain Greenway, director of the road safety and vehicle regulation division of the DOE, Northern Ireland, explained:

“The current bill – ‘The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill’ [which was introduced on 12 May 2014 and made available on the Northern Ireland Assembly website¹¹] changes drink driving law and introduces GDL.

“We are not at this stage proposing any night-time restrictions (having considered the balance between road safety and rural and work reasons) but we are proposing passenger restrictions, which we expect to be an area of the bill which will attract discussion as it passes through the Assembly.

8 www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-27383267

9 The synopsis of responses may be found at www.doeni.gov.uk/roadsafety/synopsis_of_responses_to_the_learning_to_drive_consultation__consultation_issued_may_2008_.pdf

10 www.doeni.gov.uk/roadsafety/index/new-drivers.htm

11 www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Legislation/Bills/Executive-Bills/session-2013-2014/ROAD%20TRAFFIC%20%28A%20MENDMENT%29%20BILL/Road%20Traffic%20%28Amendment%29%20Bill%20-%20As%20Introduced.pdf

“The police have not been unsupportive – they are willing to determine how to enforce it most effectively. Remember that there will be self-enforcement, parent-enforcement, and then the police.

The Isle of Man’s Road Safety Team said that it is “currently reviewing new driver proposals, with a view to consulting with elected representatives and the public on whether our current systems of training/testing are still suitable, and to obtain their views on how they could be improved, with a view to reducing accidents involving new drivers.

“The current position here is that the driving age is 16. There is an R-plate restriction for the first year after passing the driving test regardless of age, which limits the maximum speed to 50 mph.”

The **USA, Canada, New Zealand** and **Australia** are all countries with GDL which also happen to have values, language, and economic and political systems not too dissimilar to the UK’s. In most of those countries, the driving test can be taken at 16. In most of Europe, where GDL is not used, would-be drivers need to wait till they are 18. In the UK, the test can be taken at 17.

A lot can be learnt from how, where, why and when GDL was implemented, and how successful it has been.

The AAA (formerly the American Automobile Association) in the **USA** executed a campaign to introduce GDL, and in eight years such schemes spread from eight to 50 states. The organisation galvanised their members, the public and politicians.

The USA’s AAA Foundation state relations director, Jennifer Ryan, said:

“We employed many different public affairs tactics. We produced materials, we got one governor to talk to, and convince, other governors. We convinced the public of the need for the law and we brought in, and engaged with, different stakeholders. We had articles in publications, op-eds in the media. Press conferences. Victim advocates came. It was about normalising the public debate, engaging members and mobilising the public. There was a groundswell of activity.

“When you get everyone who is supportive of GDL on board – medical, law enforcement, parent/teacher groups, student groups, traffic safety advocates, etc. – policymakers have difficulty pushing back when teenagers are killing themselves, and others. We showed the politicians the numbers and statistics, and got the public to call them.

“There were obstacles, but the research showed it can save kids’ lives. Teenagers are poor drivers and the biggest risk on the roads; motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of teens on US roadways. We produced a report entitled *Everyone’s At Risk*, which highlighted

that teens are not just killing and injuring themselves, but others on the roads. Once things were in place, research showed that these laws did make a difference [reducing deaths and casualties], and other states got on board.”

Highlights from AAA’s campaign

- This is hard work and it requires planning. It might mean taking an incremental approach where compromises might be necessary.
- Get as many and varied stakeholders and organisations on board as possible – for example, get young people’s organisations that are supportive on board.
- Find and use strong allies – e.g. key politicians, police, emergency services.
- Every possible tool was used – materials were produced, there were governor-to-governor talks, press conferences, case studies, op-eds in the media, media coverage, peer-to-peer, focus groups, surveys, articles, etc.
- Statistics (evidence it worked) was presented to other states. Research showed it was effective at saving lives.
- Pressure from the electorate on politicians – they phoned, emailed, wrote and met politicians – politicians have difficulty pushing back / ignoring their voters.
- People who lost a loved one willingly wanted to help the campaign – they were strong advocates.
- Their laws are named after people, e.g. Megan’s Law. Name a law after someone involved in a crash. Connect with organisations that have relationships with victims.
- The situation at the time – their campaign started in 1995 – was that the economy was going well in the States; this is very different to today’s economic environment, both in the USA and here.
- The more people learn about it and think about it, the greater the chance of success – it is about normalising the public debate, engaging members and mobilising the public.

5.1 Key recommendations from Australia

The state of South Australia, in March 2013, passed a more restrictive GDL,¹² which includes restrictions on driving at night and passenger restrictions.

Charles Mountain, senior manager, road safety, Australia’s Royal Automobile Association, said:

“We initially got pushback from our rural cousins, but they can see the benefit of it. It’s a minor restriction for the first few months – people are going to drive for 70 years.

¹² http://mylicence.sa.gov.au/my-car-licence/graduated-licensing-scheme/gls_changes

“Drivers who are impacted by it thought it was punitive, but it’s not really. There was pushback over the restriction of rights. But all that will change is that parents might have to ferry their kids around a bit longer at nights.

“The argument we used was: what about the cost to families, the community and the government? There’s a cost of *not* doing anything.

“Government can make change. They took the line that this will make the roads safer. Advertising campaigns have a limited effect.

“We also learnt that there was a lot of comment about it being unenforceable – but police said they would enforce it. If they saw someone, they would stop them and might take action. It’s not about being draconian – it’s about education. Police did not see enforcement as too onerous.

“As a motor club we supported it. We got some adverse publicity from our members who said we should support the motorist at any cost – but having said, that there were people who said it’s a good idea.

“We used the statistics – they’re irrefutable. This is a fairly minor restriction, and this [ferrying them around] is what people are doing with teenagers anyway. With GDL they get their licence, but might have to get their parents to drive them for another 12 months at night – it’s a minor level of inconvenience.”



5.2 Lessons from South Australia

- Get as many stakeholders on board as possible and discuss GDL using a variety of methods, e.g. workshops, conferences, surveys, meetings, talks, discussions.
- Counter the “unenforceable” argument by saying that police back GDL and they would enforce it – why? Because it would save lives.
- The key message which they got across was that the inconvenience and restrictions of GDL are very much overplayed. In practice, GDL means that parents will have to ferry their child around for another six to 12 months at night. After that they will have no driving restrictions for the rest of their driving life.
- Some people thought it would be restrictive for work, but they made exemptions, e.g. working at McDonalds or playing sport: get a signed letter. They introduced a workable system which need a minor administrative process.
- They used the statistics – which were irrefutable.

5.3 France

France historically had a bad road safety record and as part of a major political push to address this a very minor version of GDL – a slightly lower speed limit for young drivers – was introduced

Deputy director general of France’s Automobile Club Association, Christian Scholly, said:

“We think [reduction in road collisions] is linked to driving methods, but it’s also linked to driving training and post-driving-test testing.

“There were a range of measures introduced in the early 2000s. The automatic speed camera network was widely deployed in 2003; the penalty point system was introduced in 1992, but adapted to the probationary period for young drivers in March 2004.

“We discussed restrictions on night-time driving and passengers, but France has many rural roads. To control night-time driving it’s impossible for police to check. It would need a large amount of controls.

“We discussed vehicle power limits – we are not in favour of that. What if a young driver must/can only take their father’s car – how can you control that?

“The changes were well accepted by the population. Young drivers weren’t that happy; but it didn’t focus just on young drivers – it encompassed all drivers.

“The French government pushed it – they focused on the figures – and there was good degree of leadership about this question of GDL. There

was an atmosphere surrounding road safety at the time – it was at the top level of the government.

“France was the bad boy of Europe. We had really bad figures ten years ago. We really decreased the number of collisions in ten years. We are not best now, but we’re in the middle – it’s a good decrease for us.”

Sweden and **Norway** have longer learning and training periods although neither has a true GDL system; and **Belgium** is currently discussing possible changes to driver training and education.

Danny Smaghe, Touring Club Belgium’s press spokesperson, explained that Belgium does not have GDL. He said the country’s three regions will be in charge of driver training and education and are currently (slowly) discussing the different criteria, format and options; they are looking at various GDL options, but nothing has been decided yet. He said:

“The education, or formation, should thus become more professional. It should start with a theoretical or cognitive part, followed by a practical period with learning, practising/training and finishing. There should be a system based on lifelong learning afterwards as well.”

Erik Kjellin at Motormännens Riksförbund (the Swedish Automobile Association) explained that the only change to driving in Sweden (and it was a minor one) was in 2006, where supervisors must have special training – for example, if a parent wants to take their child out they can still do this, but they must undertake the special training first. Erik said:

“A lot of people were angry at first, but the special training is not that much hassle. It’s a bit more hassle than before, but it’s quite easy to pass the test to be approved as a supervisor.

“In New Zealand, Canada and the USA you can have a licence from 16; in Europe it’s 18 – that’s why GDL has not been employed here.

“I know a lot of countries are looking at GDL because the problem is very big – it’s hard to reach young aggressive drivers.

“The only way to get experience here is from 16 to 18, driving with a supervisor. Not everyone has that opportunity, though.

“Accidents are going down, but that’s because of safer cars and safer road infrastructure, not because of changes in attitudes.”

Per Gunnar Veltun of the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, said:

“We do not have GDL at all. We are strong believers in training. The driving test in itself does not tell whether you are a responsible driver – it shows you have certain knowledge and you have practical skills at the particular moment when the test is done. The driving test will always be a kind of a theatre.

“The learning process through the training period should have an impact on individuals. You are taught to take care of yourself and other individuals – we try to create a good atmosphere for learning.

“As I understand it, you rely on testing in the UK. We do not rely on the test only. Our expectation is on the training, primarily. Individuals should develop responsibilities within themselves to become responsible drivers – that’s more important than just passing the test.

“GDL has been discussed. We cannot see how restrictions will make a big difference in our case. For instance, we discussed young drivers not driving in the dark. Many people live very remotely in Norway and public transport is not so good. It could be it’s very difficult politically to introduce too many restrictions. Restrictions would hinder many people moving around in Norway. It would probably be very hard to monitor. We prefer to avoid rules that people are likely to violate. We do not want to have different limits for alcohol – all drivers, also the experienced ones, in fact everyone in Norway has to avoid alcohol when driving.

“We rely largely on driving instructors and their ability to help the learning process; they should be good teachers – they are a very important part of the driver education system.”

5.4 Europe

The FIA (Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile) indicated that GDL was something they were neither for nor against, but that it could be something they can be convinced of.

The European Transport Safety Council would like to see member states introduce GDL systems to address the high risks faced by new drivers, thus allowing them to gain initial driving experience under lower-risk conditions, after gaining the learner permit but before receiving fully licensed status. It wants to see improved training and licensing systems, high levels of experience prior to licensing (via accompanied driving), and appropriate incentives and disincentives. It also wants to exploit the benefits of new technologies.



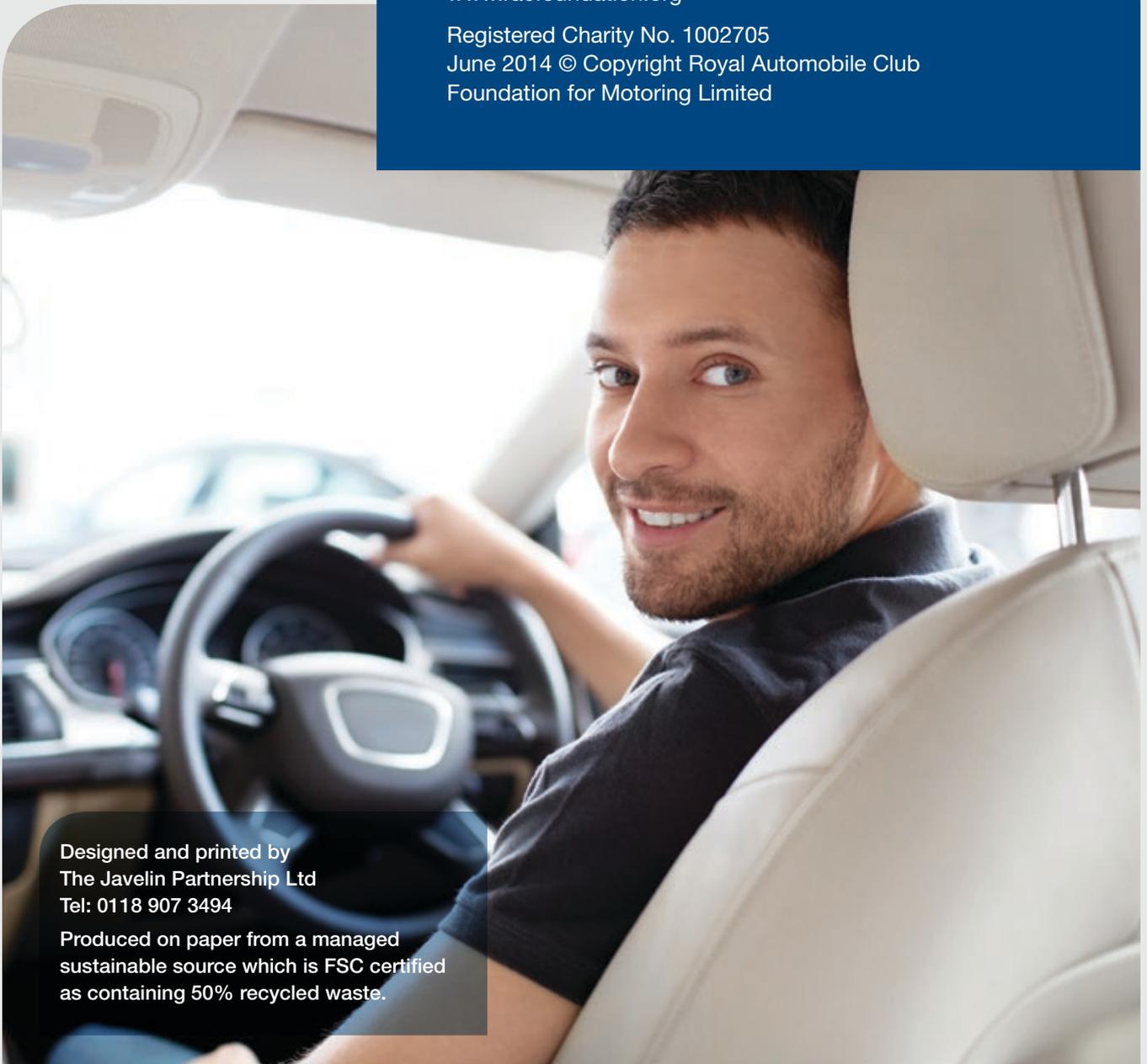
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RAC Foundation
89-91 Pall Mall
London
SW1Y 5HS

Tel no: 020 7747 3445
www.racfoundation.org

Registered Charity No. 1002705
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Designed and printed by
The Javelin Partnership Ltd
Tel: 0118 907 3494

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sustainable source which is FSC certified
as containing 50% recycled waste.