



Response from:

The Motor Schools Association of Great Britain

101 Wellington Road North, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 2LP

Tel: 0161 429 9669 Fax: 0161 429 9779 Email: mail@msagb.co.uk

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Motor Schools Association of Great Britain (MSA) makes the following response to DSA Consultation Document: Driving Standards Agency Fees 2009
- 1.2 The MSA is the national trade association for driving instructors and schools founded in 1935. Members of the association are in the main Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructors (ADI). We also have a partnership with the Institute of Large Goods Vehicle Driving Instructors (ILGVDI) and represent their interests together with those of potential driving instructors (PDIs) and a number of bus/coach instructors and motorcycle instructors. Our current membership database is just over seven thousand four hundred and fifty.

2 COLLECTING THE VIEWS OF MEMBERS

- 2.1 In order to canvass as wide a range of opinions as possible, before submitting the association's views to the DSA, we invited all MSA members to comment through our monthly publication *Newslink*. Brief details of the consultation paper were published in the December 2008 issue under the headline *Inflation busting, credit crunching, MPTC building; test fee increase*.
- 2.2 Members of the association's Board of Management have also consulted members through regional meetings and the association's network of branches and associated local ADI groups and their comments have further informed this response.

3 GENERAL COMMENTS

- 3.1 An independent observer might think that the DSA Fees Consultation paper for 2009 would be proposing, in these difficult economic times, a modest fee increase on their most popular service the weekday car test. An increase perhaps at or even below the current retail price index of 4.2 per cent (as at date of consultation launch). That view might be reinforced by the fact that last year's increase was 16.5 per cent.
- 3.2 Sadly, no. This year's proposed increase from £56.50 to £63.50 is a rise of nearly 13 per cent. Over the last six years the fee, for a weekday driving test, has increased by 67 per cent from £38 to £63.5°.

- 3.3 We wonder why such huge increases in test fees are necessary. Is it because driving examiner wages are shooting up? Is it the agency's posh new offices that have to be paid for?
- 3.4 Could it be the new multi-purpose driving test centres? Sixty six new premises, with the planned costs way above the original estimates a huge effort by DSA staff to produce centres suitable for the 4.3 per cent of test candidates who are on motorcycles.
- 3.5 Rather than the huge cost of MPTCs, the difficulties in finding suitable sites and the upset caused by the closing of local centres, would it not have been more sensible to have a two part motorcycle test as is now being proposed and simply use existing hard standing areas -car parks and the like -to conduct the off road section of the test?
- 3.6 It is a shame that driving test candidates are having to endure huge fee increases, with no discernable improvement in service, in order to pay for the decisions of ministers who have long since moved on.

4 RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSALS

Proposal 1A: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the fee for theory tests taken by learner car drivers and motorcycle riders by £1.00? Totally agree – Comment: At just over 3 per cent this seems reasonable.

Proposal 1B: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the fee for practical tests taken by learner car drivers by £7.00? Totally disagree – Comment: Exceeds inflation.

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Proposal 1C: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the fee for the practical vocational and car plus trailer (B+E) tests by £14.00? Totally disagree – Comment: Exceeds inflation.

Proposal 2A: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the fee for the theory test taken as part of the ADI qualification process by £10.00? Totally disagree – Comment: Exceeds inflation.

Proposal 2B: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the fees for the practical tests taken as part of the ADI qualification process by £12.00? Totally disagree – Comment: Exceeds inflation.

Proposal 2C: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the fee for a Trainee Licence issued as part of the ADI qualification process by £15.00? Totally disagree – Comment: Exceeds inflation.

Proposal 3A: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the fee for taxi and private hire car tests conducted by DSA? Totally disagree – Comment: Exceeds inflation.

Proposal 3B: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the fee for the practical tests taken as part of the qualification process for the voluntary schemes operated by DSA? Totally disagree – Comment: Exceeds inflation.

Proposal 3C: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the fee for Pass Plus products? Totally disagree – Comment: Exceeds inflation.

5 PUBLICATION OF MSA COMMENTS

5.1 We are content for our response to this consultation to be published by DSA.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 We are pleased that the DSA have returned to the use of a bi-polar scale for agree/disagree questions in this consultation which they had dropped in their Learning to Drive consultation paper.