



Response from
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Motor Schools Association of Great Britain (MSA) makes the following response to an informal consultation from DSA regarding an amendment tabled by Harry Cohen MP, to the Road Safety Bill which will be considered at Report Stage/Third Reading. If accepted, the amendment will place a requirement on Approved Driving Instructors to: ***“consult annually with local authorities in determining which highways they may use while providing driving instruction.”***
- 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.
- 1.3 In order to canvass as wide a range of opinions as possible in the time available before submitting the association’s views to the DSA, we invited MSA members to comment through our internet forum. Members of the association’s Board of Management were also consulted and they have sought views amongst members of their regional committees and the association’s network of branches and associated local ADI groups.
- 1.4 We are content for our response to be included in any summary of responses, which the DSA may wish to divulge.

2 GENERAL COMMENTS

- 2.1 The idea that driving instructors should have to *“consult annually with local authorities in determining which highways they may use while providing driving instruction”* is not one that is likely to find favour with any driver trainer or driving school not least on the grounds of cost and waste of resources but also from the point of view of the well being of learner drivers.
- 2.2 As an example one of our respondents noted - *“In my area there are a number of geographically small unitary authorities. I personally would have to consult with seven. As the proposal does not state learner instruction NDIS (National Driver Improvement Scheme) training would add another four to my list. For fleet trainers the list would be mind boggling.”*
- 2.3 Another respondent drew attention to the health and safety risks to pupil of not being able to pick them up and drop them off at home she wrote – *“If driver trainers are banned from using certain roads, what happens if you they have a young female pupil who happens to live down one of the roads. These days you hear so often of girls being attacked yards from their own homes, so when I drop them off I always wait till they are*

inside the house before I drive away. If this rule was introduced I would have to leave them to walk home alone.”

- 2.4 This association does from time to time receive requests from members of the public, local authorities and in the past the DSA to limit the use some driver trainers make of some roads. There is no doubt that from time to time some particular streets are subject to somewhat high usage by some instructors. However, the idea that local authorities should be able to restrict the areas that are used for training and testing is, in our view, not only daft but unfair. If one group of residence persuades their local authority to place their street on the “restricted list” then the residents in the next street will soon want the same.

3 FACING THE CHALLENGE

- 3.1 In our experience the number of complaints received are very few and where usage of a particular area does draw complaints this association is happy, as we have done in the past, to highlight the complaint in *Newslink* and ask members to consider residents feelings where possible.
- 3.2 On the odd occasion that we do this we also point out to those complaining and indeed urge the DSA to do so, that there are a number of positive benefits to having learners practice in their area.
- 3.2.1 The presence of learners in an area tends to slow down traffic in that area
- 3.2.2 Instructors are able to report to police any suspicious activities in a particular area and the MSA has been instrumental in assisting in the setting up of “Instructor Watch” projects in a number of areas.
- 3.2.3 Learners are taught to drive correctly and hopefully this example will rub off on other drivers in the area thus helping to promote road safety.

4 DSA CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROBLEM

- 4.1 One of the factors that can contribute to the problem of over use of a particular area is the DSA policy of closing local driving test centers in favor of “super centers” with higher numbers of examiners which means both test routes and training areas become over populated.
- 4.2 Our advice to the DSA is stop closing down test centers which provide a good service to the public. The MSA supports local centers for local people.

4.3 CONCLUSION

- 4.4 We must stress that we will defend most vigorously the right of a learner driver, in a properly insured car, with a valid road fund licence, accompanied by an ADI to use whichever road they or their instructor, wish.