

Response from: The Driver Training Industry  
co-ordinated by The Motor Schools Association of Great Britain  
in conjunction with the Driving Instructors Association

Supported by:  
Approved Driving Instructors Federation  
British School of Motoring  
Driving Instructors Democratic Union  
North Manchester Approved Driving Instructors Association

c/o MSA 101 Wellington Road North, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 2LP  
Tel: 0161 429 9669 Fax: 0161 429 9779 Email: mail@msagb.co.uk

October 2008

## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 **Driver trainers in Greater Manchester would like to request that driver trainer vehicles are given a 100% discount under the proposed GM Congestion Charging Scheme.**

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Motor Schools Association of Great Britain (MSA) has coordinated this response in conjunction with the Driving Instructors Association supported by: Approved Driving Instructors Federation, British School of Motoring, Driving Instructors Democratic Union, North Manchester Approved Driving Instructors Association.
- 2.2 The bodies listed represent about half the driving instructors operating in Great Britain and a similar proportion of those operating in the Greater Manchester area.

## 3 COLLECTING THE VIEWS OF DRIVER TRAINERS

- 3.1 In order to understand the issues before submitting this response, a number of meetings have taken place between driver trainer representatives and various officials and consultants involved in putting forward the proposals. The organisations concerned have canvassed as wide a range of driver trainer opinions as possible. An open meeting for driving instructors was held at Fallowfield in Manchester supported by all the above bodies and the above bodies have also canvassed opinions amongst their members by the use of phone, post and email.
- 3.2 We have invited the Driving Standards Agency, the executive agency of the Department for Transport responsible for driver testing, to cooperate in this response but they have felt unable to because they are part of government.

## 4 GENERAL COMMENT

- 4.1 Driver trainer organisations are not anti congestion charging *per se*. This response seeks to put forward the case for special treatment for driver trainers. However, we are aware that a number of driver trainers may become involved in any future no vote campaign if they do not achieve any concessions.

## 5 DISCOUNT REQUEST

- 5.1 We would like to request that driver trainers are given a 100% discount under the proposed GM Congestion Charging Scheme.

## 6 DRIVER TRAINERS ARE NOT COMMUTERS

- 6.1 Instructors are not travelling to a destination they are not commuters, a driving lesson does not consist of travelling along a route to or from central Manchester. Most learning to drive is carried out in side streets with the main roads only used to travel from one training ground to another.
- 6.2 Driving lessons do not contribute to congestion within the areas covered by the zone, when confronted with congestion instructors normally divert pupils on to side roads because learner drivers do not learn an awful lot sat in a traffic jam.

## 7 NO TAX ON ROAD SAFETY

- 7.1 Charging driving instructors congestion charges would undoubtedly force up the cost of learning to drive by those living in or near the congestion charging areas.
- 7.2 Driving instructors, because of the nature of the job they do, will take pupils in and out of the congestion area and therefore be likely to incur the maximum charge per day.
- 7.3 It is difficult to state exactly how much the increase on learning to drive would be, however a figure around 8.3% is suggested.
- Daily charge per instructor £10 divided between 6 pupils per day paying around £20 per lesson = 8.33%
- 7.4 Recent government research shows, that on average a learner spends around £1,500 on driving lessons, this would represent an increase cost to each learner driver of around £124.
- 7.5 The consequences of an increase in the cost of learning to drive would be a further increase in unlicensed driving. With estimates of the number of unlicensed drivers in Great Britain exceeding a million, this is not a figure that any responsible body will seek to increase.
- 7.6 Learning to drive safely and responsibly is an important goal for all new drivers. There should be no restriction on where learners learn or the traffic conditions they learn under, we believe it should be access all areas for learner drivers

## 8 CONSEQUENCES FOR DRIVER TESTING IN GREATER MANCHESTER

- 8.1 Because of the number of driving test centres located within or close to the congestion charging cordons, we believe that many tests will cause a congestion charge fee to be debited, without their knowledge, to a driving instructors account.

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- 8.2 It has been suggested by officials that DSA could be persuaded to re-route tests during these periods in order that the cordons are not crossed. Information we have received suggests this is unlikely as it may undermine the credibility of the driving test.
- 8.3 In order to avoid unseen charges accruing to their accounts driving instructors may refuse to allow their cars to be used at these test centres during the congestion charging periods.
- 8.4 There are six tests centres affected by the congestion charging zones. Four out of eight scheduled tests per day could be lost as a result of students and trainers trying to avoid congestion charging.
- 8.5 This could mean that 50% of test slots are lost per year in Greater Manchester and this may lead to a decision by the DSA that testing in Greater Manchester is unviable and centres may close, requiring people to travel long distances, at increased costs, to take their tests.

## 9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Driver Training is a vital road safety function and the people of Greater Manchester should not be made to pay higher prices to improve their own personal mobility.