



Media Release by the Motor Schools Association

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MSA give cautious welcome to government proposals

The Motor Schools Association of Great Britain has today given a cautious welcome to proposals unveiled by the Department for Transport (DfT) aimed at reducing road deaths, particularly amongst newly qualified drivers.

The raft of measures, published in a Green Paper, include:

- A minimum learning period for all candidates sitting a driving test
- Allowing learners to take some tuition on a motorway prior to the practical driving test
- Increasing the current probationary period set for new drivers from two years to three years, during which a licence can be revoked if the driver gains more than six points on their licence.
- A more rigorous driving test
- Greater incentives for newly qualified drivers to take additional post-test training
- Possible temporary restrictions on a newly qualified drivers licence

The government also expects to see the measures have a positive effect on insurance premiums, particularly amongst young drivers who currently face exorbitant premiums from many insurance companies.

Peter Harvey, National Chairman of the MSA, who today attended a meeting with officials at the Department for Transport, gave the Green Paper a 'cautious welcome'. After the meeting Mr Harvey said: "Whilst we are in favour of any measures that reduce road deaths, we are not in favour of change for change's sake. The measures should not just be about reducing insurance premiums; they must be about saving lives – particularly young lives".

The MSA have already announced a number of ideas to strengthen the proposal, which Peter Harvey discussed with officials. Whilst the MSA generally agree that the minimum learning period of 12 months 'sounds good on paper' it must have some structure and quality. The idea of log books for use by driving instructors should also be extended and it should be for the learner to take ownership, as in most other learning environments.

Peter Harvey continued: "As well as our suggestions on the quality and structure of the minimum learning period, it is essential that the candidates themselves become involved in the process and that we make it a modern system. Log books have been on the agenda for years, but in adopting them we must embrace modern technology such as smart phones and tablets and communicate in a way that the younger generation uses".

Commenting on private practice, which the Driving Standards Agency has been promoting for some years, Mr Harvey suggested to officials that a separate syllabus was introduced for 'supervising' adults, adding to a new robust structure".

The full proposals, which are due to be published later in the spring, will follow a consultation with the wider industry. It is expected that legislation will be in place before the end of 2014.

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Editors note:

The MSA was founded in 1935 as a representative body for driving instructors and driving school owners and is the voice for around 6,400 instructors.

The MSA has consultative status with the Driving Standards Agency (an executive agency of the Department for Transport)

MSA lobbies on behalf of its members for and campaigns for better road safety.