



## **Media Release by the Motor Schools Association**

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### *DSA Chief Executive Addresses MSA Conference*

The Chief Executive of the Driving Standards Agency, Rosemary Thew, last week addressed the annual conference of the Motor Schools Association in Northamptonshire.

Speaking at the conference, Rosemary Thew focused on the modernisation of driver training, which the agency sees as a priority, and in particular the Approved Driving Instructor qualification process.

Addressing a number of issues, Ms Thew started with the matter of placing a cap on the Register of Approved Driving Instructors: "We will not place a cap on the number of ADIs joining the register even though we know it is what many instructors want: but it simply will not happen. We want to raise standards within the industry from pre-entry to check-test, but we also want to reduce the regulatory burden". The Chief Executive went on to discuss the current consultation process, in particular the possibility of charging for the check-test, advising that it "would be in line with the governments 'user pays' initiative." The new check-test intends to be a standard-based check and would stop the practice of allowing an examiner playing the role of a pupil. Ms Thew continued, "We want to see the pupil learning and to see the ADI spotting, rectifying and remedying driver errors. It is a risk-spotting exercise that aims to create good, respectful and safe drivers."

Discussing Continuing Professional Development, which has been on the reform agenda for some time, Rosemary Thew said that rather than a mandatory approach, she wanted to 'encourage ADIs to show commitment' towards CPD, believing that the current test of continued fitness to give instruction performs an adequate part of that job. The DSA also believes that compulsory CPD would put an excessive burden onto small business, which accounts for a large sector of the driving school industry.

John Lepine, the MSA's General Manager, commented: "We were delighted to have Rosemary address our conference and are encouraged by the suggestions of reform to the qualification process for new driving instructors."

Rosemary Thew went on to discuss business partnerships and the need to bring driver testing 'closer to the customer' by providing a more flexible service to candidates. There was also a heavy focus on discussing young drivers and an emphasise that the minister was determined to improve the flow of information to parents as well as young drivers, including a series of initiatives to look at post-test training.

Summarising, Mr Lepine said: "We have been discussing both modernisation and CPD for several years without any conclusive result and it is disappointing that modernisation is still no further forward and that CPD has been effectively shelved. As well as ensuring better quality instructors coming through the system, we need to protect our current instructors, many of whom have been hit hard by the current recession."

**END**

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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.

*Glossary:*

*Register refers to the Register of Approved Driving Instructors*

*ADI is a Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructor*

*Check-test refers to the DSAs test of continued fitness to give driving instruction*

*CPD is Continuing Professional Development*