

# Allowing learner drivers to take lessons on the motorway Response to Consultation

**Moving Britain Ahead**

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# Contents

- 1. Executive summary 4
- 2. Analysis of questions asked in the consultation 5
- 3. Focus groups with learner and novice drivers 19
- 4. Conclusions 21
- 5. Next Steps 24
  - List of organisations who responded to the consultation 25

# 1. Executive summary

## Introduction

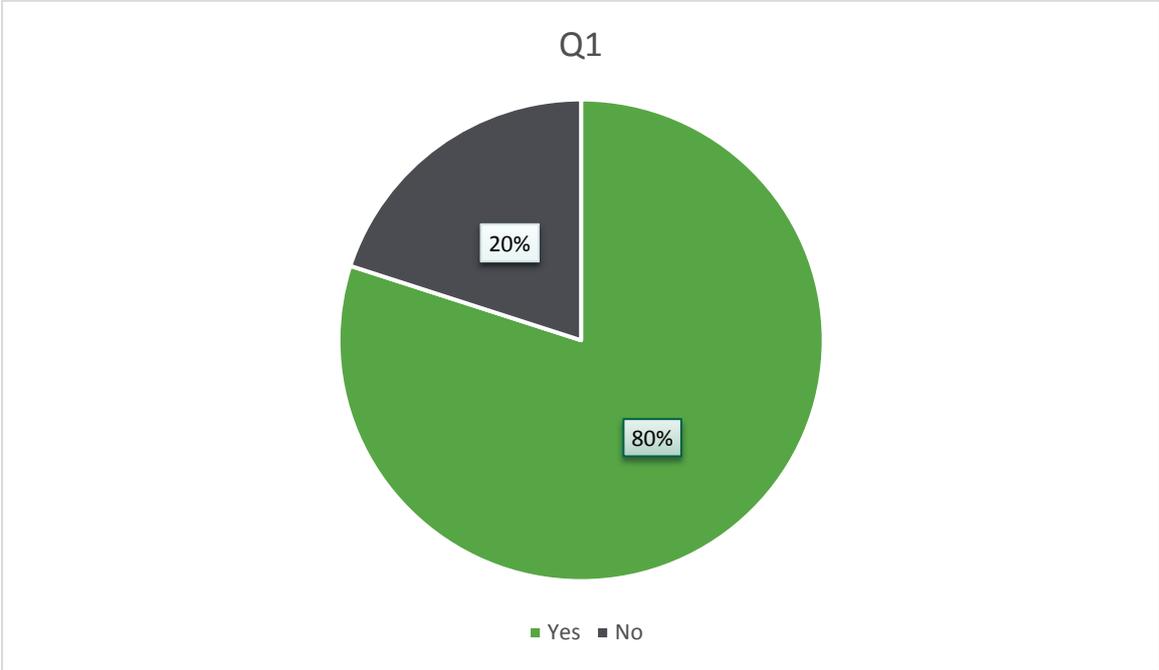
- 1.1 On 30 December 2016, the Department for Transport (DfT) issued a consultation entitled "Allowing learner drivers to take lessons on motorways" and invited responses from driving instructors, members of the public and organisations interested in road safety.
- 1.2 The consultation set out proposals to allow learner drivers to drive on motorways as part of their pre-test instruction, subject to certain safeguards, i.e. provided they are accompanied by an approved driving instructor and driving a dual-controlled car. The proposals apply only to England, Wales and Scotland.
- 1.3 The consultation closed on the 17 February 2017 and 2928 responses were received. There was strong support for the proposal that learner drivers should be allowed to take lessons on the motorway when accompanied by an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI), with over 80% of all respondents agreeing with this.
- 1.4 Additionally, opinions were sought on the use of dual-controlled cars to be used in the pre-test instruction of learner drivers on the motorway. Again, a majority (80%) of all responses were in agreement.
- 1.5 Although comments were welcomed with regards to the potential financial impacts of the proposal, almost two thirds of respondents did not have any comments relating to this. Of those that did comment, there were some negative financial impacts highlighted - including higher lesson costs to pupils, increased running costs for ADIs and increased driver insurance premiums. However, the majority of these responses concluded that any negative financial impact would be justified as they would be offset by the wider benefits of learner drivers receiving pre-test instruction on the motorways.
- 1.6 Additional comments received were generally positive, but did include concerns about the distance some learners would need to travel to reach their nearest motorway.
- 1.7 The Department for Transport would like to thank all those who responded to the consultation. On the basis of the response to the consultation, we propose to make changes to legislation which would allow learner drivers to receive instruction on the motorways, prior to their test, when accompanied by an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI), in a dual-controlled car.

## 2. Analysis of questions asked in the consultation

### Introduction

- 2.1 A total of 2928 consultation responses were received. This comprised 2,744 online responses, 182 emailed responses and 2 postal responses. 138 responses were submitted on behalf of organisations, with the remaining responses being (or assumed) answered on an individual basis.
- 2.2 The consultation allowed responses to be made online and this proved to be the most popular way of responding, with over 93% of the total responses received via this method.
- 2.3 In our analysis of the responses, all have been considered irrespective of the method used to respond. Many of the emailed and postal responses did not follow the numbered question format making them more difficult to assess against the questions asked. In 22 email responses, it was concluded that the respondent did not provide any productive comment and so, these responses were not included in our overall analyses. A further 53 responses were marked as duplicates and were also excluded.
- 2.4 Of a total 2,853 responses included in our analyses, 1,597 were from Approved Driving Instructors and 135 on behalf of relevant organisations.

**Q1. Do you think that learner drivers should be allowed to take lessons on motorways, subject to certain safeguards?**



2.5 The vast majority of responses, both from the general public and from organisations, agreed that learner drivers should be allowed to take lessons on motorways, subject to certain safeguards.

2.6 The safeguards that we outlined in the consultation were that learner drivers on the motorway should be accompanied by an Approved Driving Instructor and in a dual-controlled vehicle.

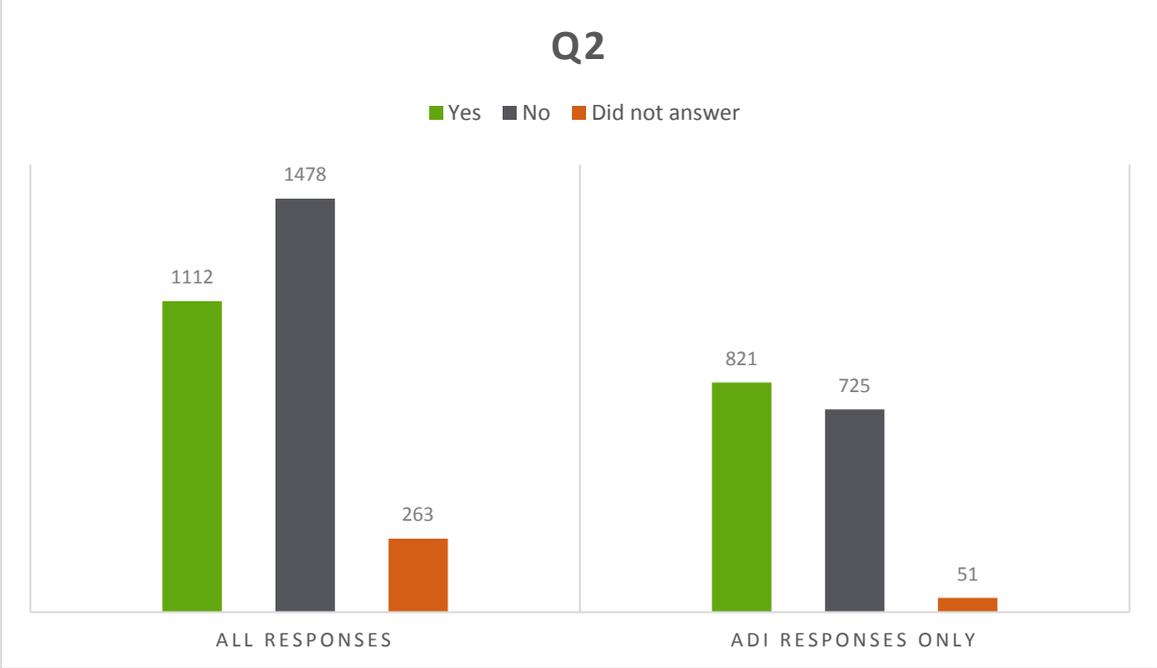
2.7 Comments received in support of the proposal included:

*"It's about time this became legal. - I can currently take learners on dual carriageways that are almost the same as motorways so being able to take them on a motorway can only be a good thing."*

*"I believe this proposal to be long overdue. The current situation, which allows individuals to access the motorway network with NO instruction, is dangerous and open to abuse."*

*"I am currently learning to drive with my parent in my own car & I think this is a great idea."*

## Q2. Do you think that lessons on motorways should be optional for learner drivers?



- 2.8 The majority of respondents thought motorway lessons should not be optional. In supplementary comments, many respondents said that motorway lessons should be mandatory but some, particularly ADIs, recognised the impracticality of this.
- 2.9 Comments from respondents showed mixed views:

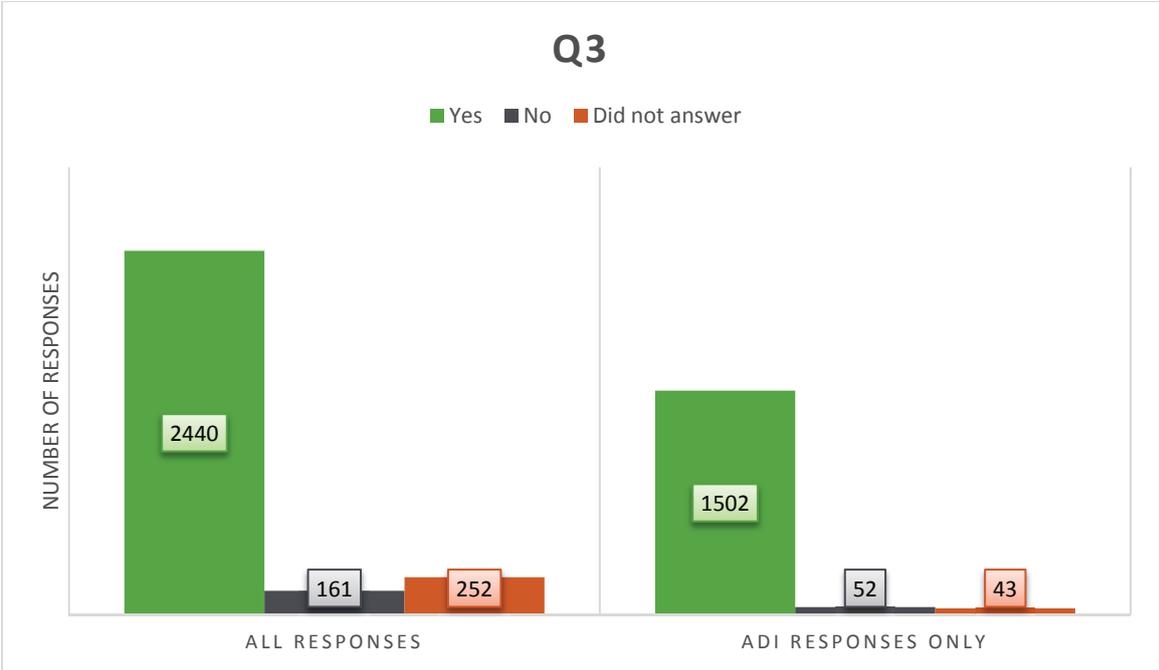
*"Great proposal if kept voluntary"*

*"I think that allowing learners on motorways with an instructor is an excellent idea, but I do believe that it should be mandatory"*

*"I believe it should be compulsory for learners to have had some exposure to motorways prior to passing their tests"*

*"Some areas of the country are too far from motorways to make learning on a motorway feasible"*

**Q3. Do you think that motorway lessons for learner drivers should only be provided by a fully qualified Approved Driving Instructor?**



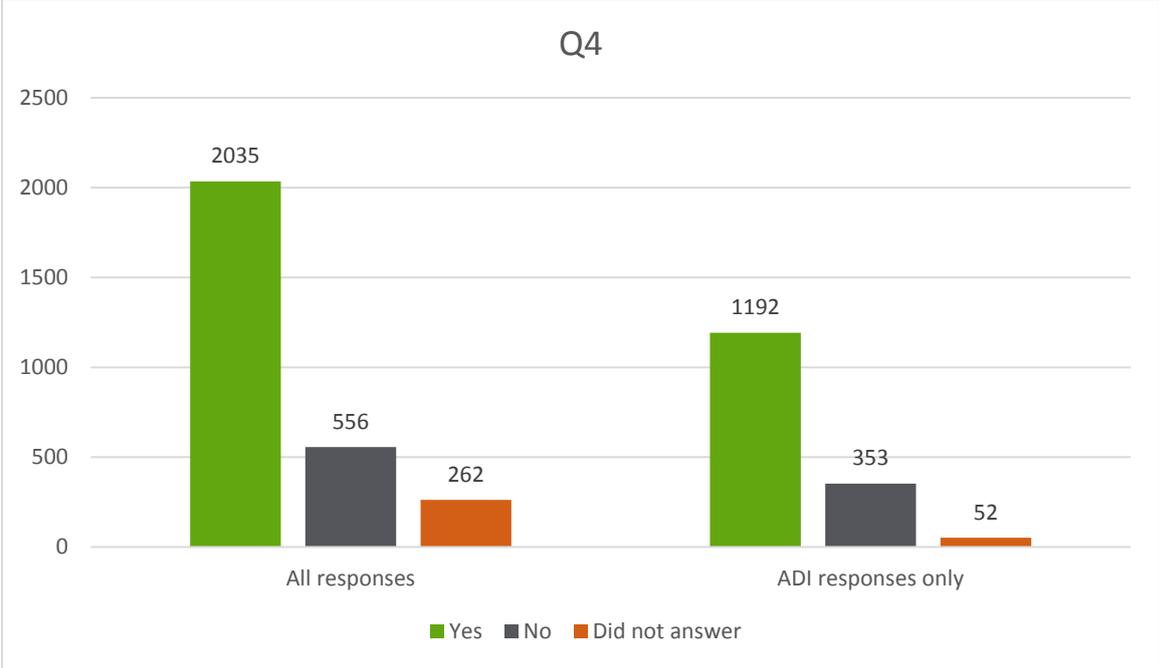
2.10 The majority of respondents, around 85%, agreed that motorway lessons should only be provided by a fully qualified Approved Driving Instructor.

2.11 This trend was even stronger when considering ADI responses alone, with 94% agreeing with this proposal.

2.12 One respondent commented:

*"Under no circumstances should family and friends be able to take learners on motorways"*

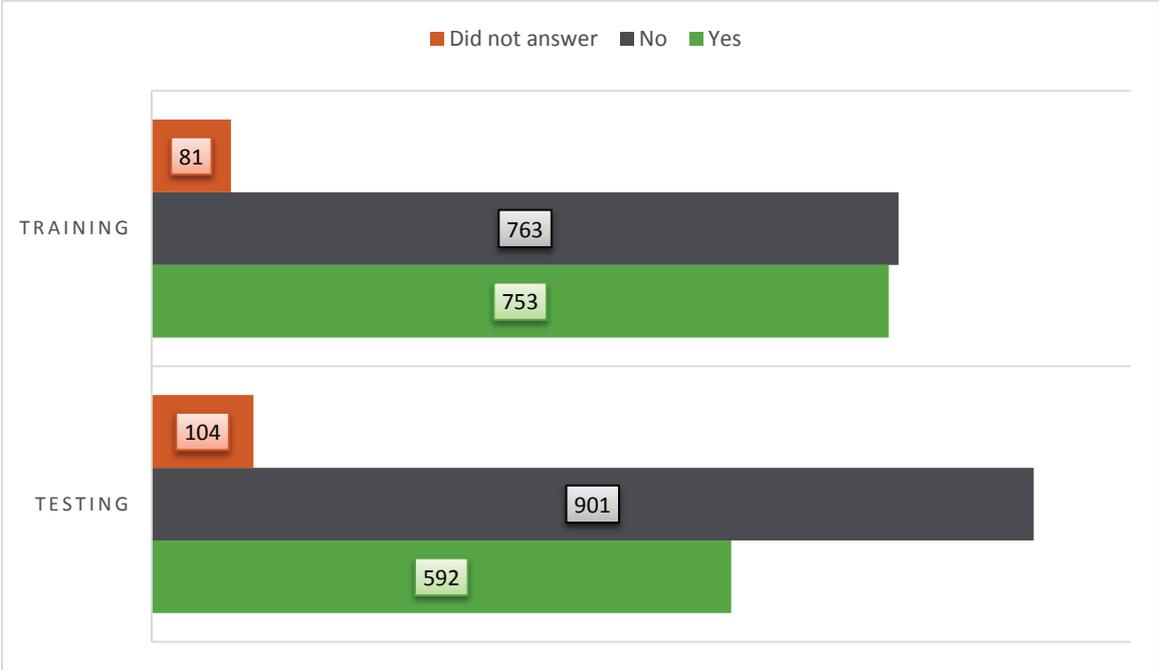
**Q4. Do you agree that trainee driving instructors, (Potential Driving Instructors), should not be allowed to provide learner driver motorway lessons?**



2.13 The majority of respondents agreed that trainee driving instructors should not be allowed to provide learner driver motorway lessons.

2.14 ADI responses also reflected this position with similar results.

Q5. If you are an ADI, do you feel that the current training and testing system provides sufficient grounding for you to provide pre-test motorway lessons? If not, where should it be strengthened?



2.15 This question was only asked of ADI respondents and generated mixed responses.

**ADI training**

2.16 The responses for whether current ADI training is sufficient for ADIs to provide motorway lessons were almost equally split between Yes and No. Supplementary comments suggested that although many ADIs were confident in their own abilities, they had concerns about the standard of other ADIs. Others observed that as ADIs they already train learners for dual-carriageways and offer Pass Plus lessons on motorways so no additional training should be necessary for ADIs.

2.17 Supplementary comments from ADIs showed mixed views:

*"I see many ADIs who have not taken any further training since qualifying 20+ years ago giving poor or put of date info to learners"*

*"A good ADI who does pass plus already will be fine"*

*"As higher standard drivers and given that motorways are safer than city driving our skills should already be high enough"*

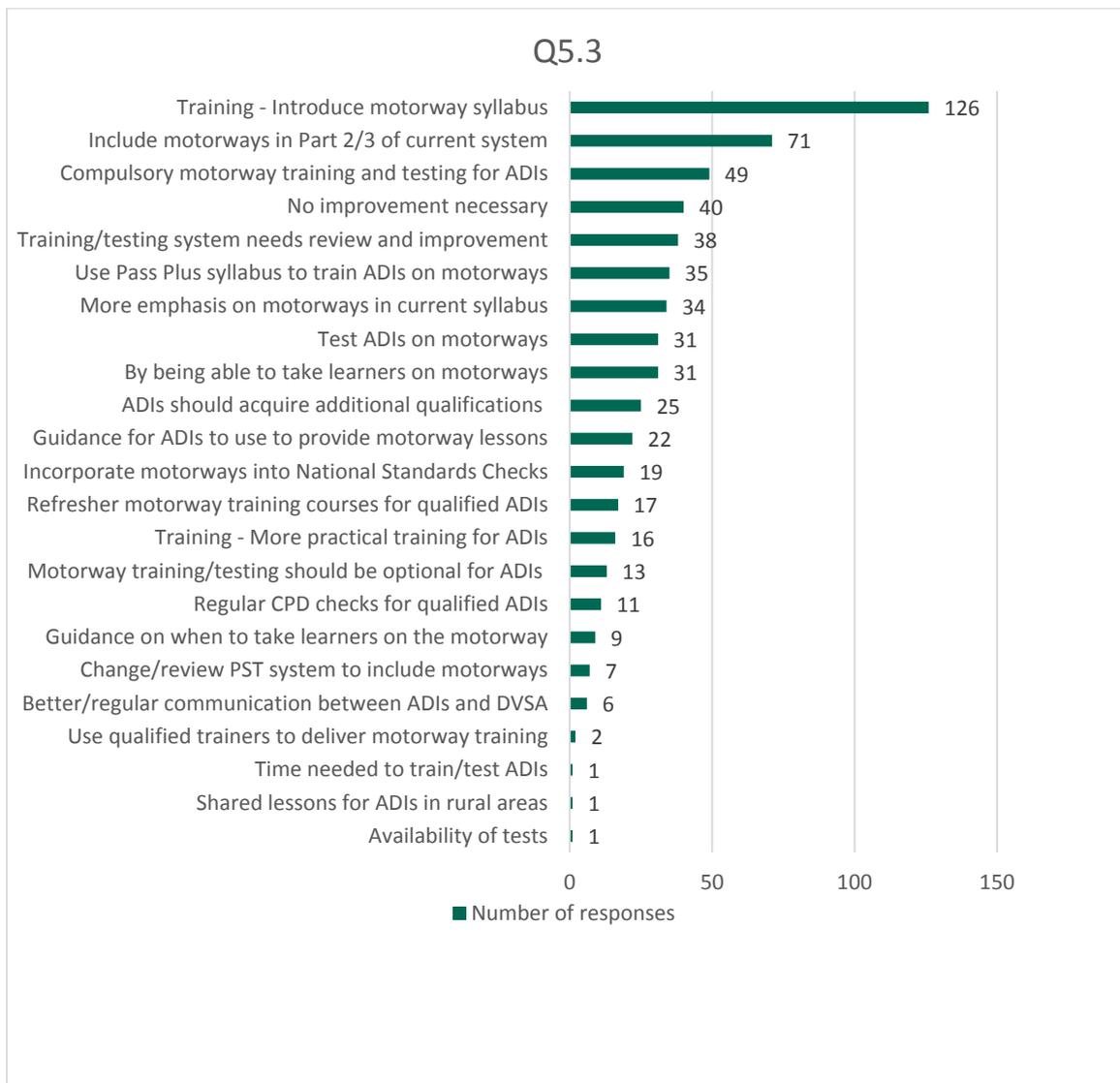
*"I have concerns regarding the ability and quality of some current ADIs in making a proper risk assessment before considering a pupil ready to experience motorway driving"*

## ADI testing

2.18 Most ADI responses did not agree that the current testing system provides sufficient grounding for them to provide pre-test motorway lessons. However, some of the supplementary comments show that there may have been some confusion over whether this question was referring to ADI tests or the practical test that learner drivers take.

## Strengthening ADI training and testing

2.19 Many ADIs provided suggestions for how the ADI<sup>1</sup> training and testing regime could be strengthened to support motorway lessons.

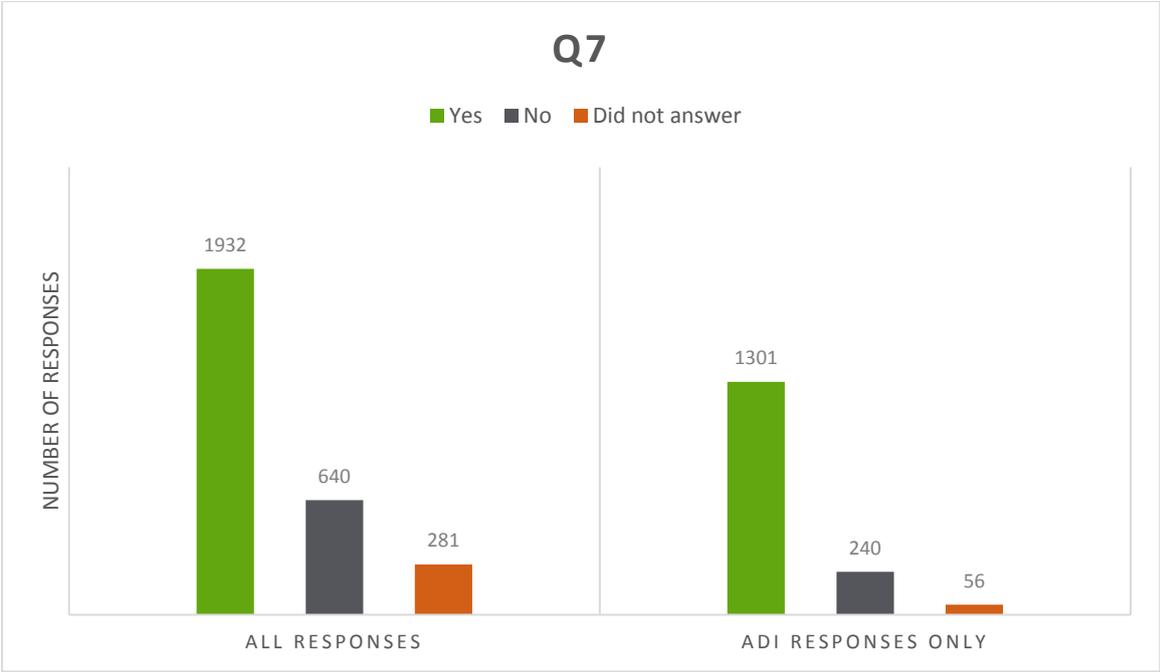


<sup>1</sup> Suggestion relating to learner driver training and testing have been excluded from this analysis.

## Q6. Are there any specific issues you think should be included in guidance to ADIs?

- 2.20 There were many suggestions of the sort of guidance that could be made available to ADIs. This question was open to all respondents, not just ADIs, and therefore responses include areas that are already captured in ADI training material.
- 2.21 The suggestions received can be grouped into four areas:
- Theoretical knowledge such as differences between motorways and other roads, lorry breaking distances and route-planning;
  - Practical aspects including joining the motorway, changing lines and advance observation;
  - Behavioural considerations such as the effect of tiredness or monotonous journeys;
  - ADI preparations including how to prepare pupils for motorway driving and considering their own experience or further training needs.
- 2.22 In its response to the consultation, the National Associations Strategic Partnership (a representative organisation promoting the interests of ADIs) advised that it would prepare guidance for ADIs if the proposal went ahead; with the Motor Schools Association of Great Britain and the Driving Instructors Association indicating support for this approach.

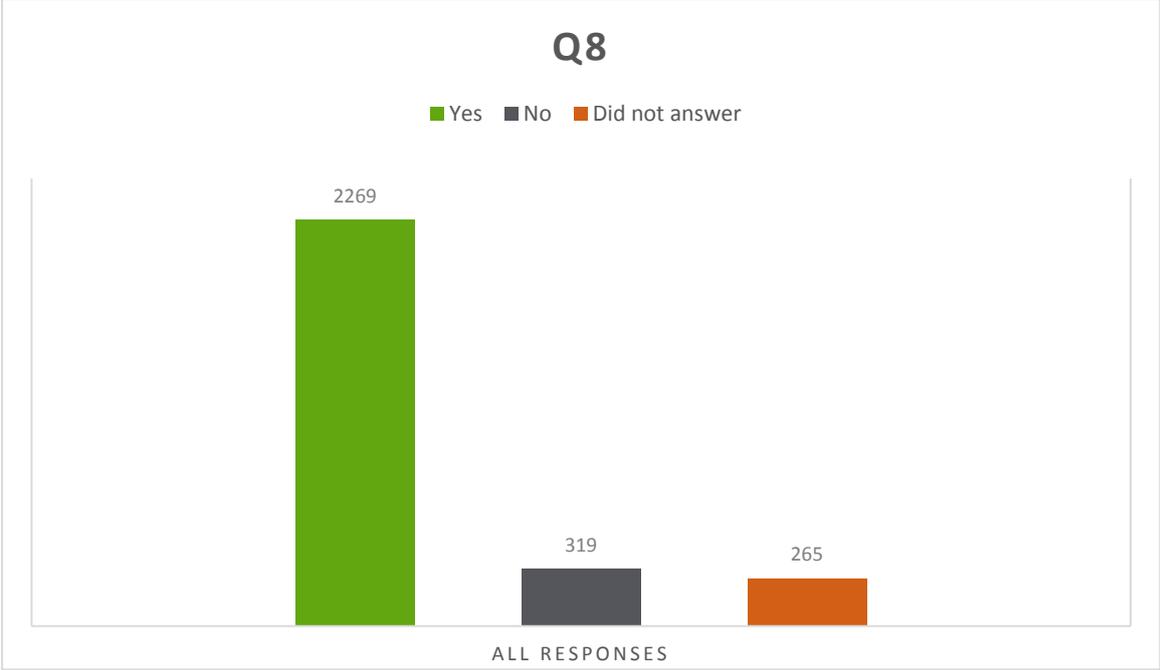
**Q7. Do you agree that ADIs should exercise their discretion in providing a motorway lesson to a learner driver with whom they have had no previous contact?**



2.23 As shown in the chart, the majority of responses agreed that ADIs should be allowed to use their own discretion when deciding to provide a motorway lesson to a learner driver with whom they have had no previous contact.

2.24 Respectively, most ADIs also agreed with this proposal, supporting the position set out in the consultation paper that it was not necessary for the Government to mandate when and to whom ADIs should offer motorway lessons.

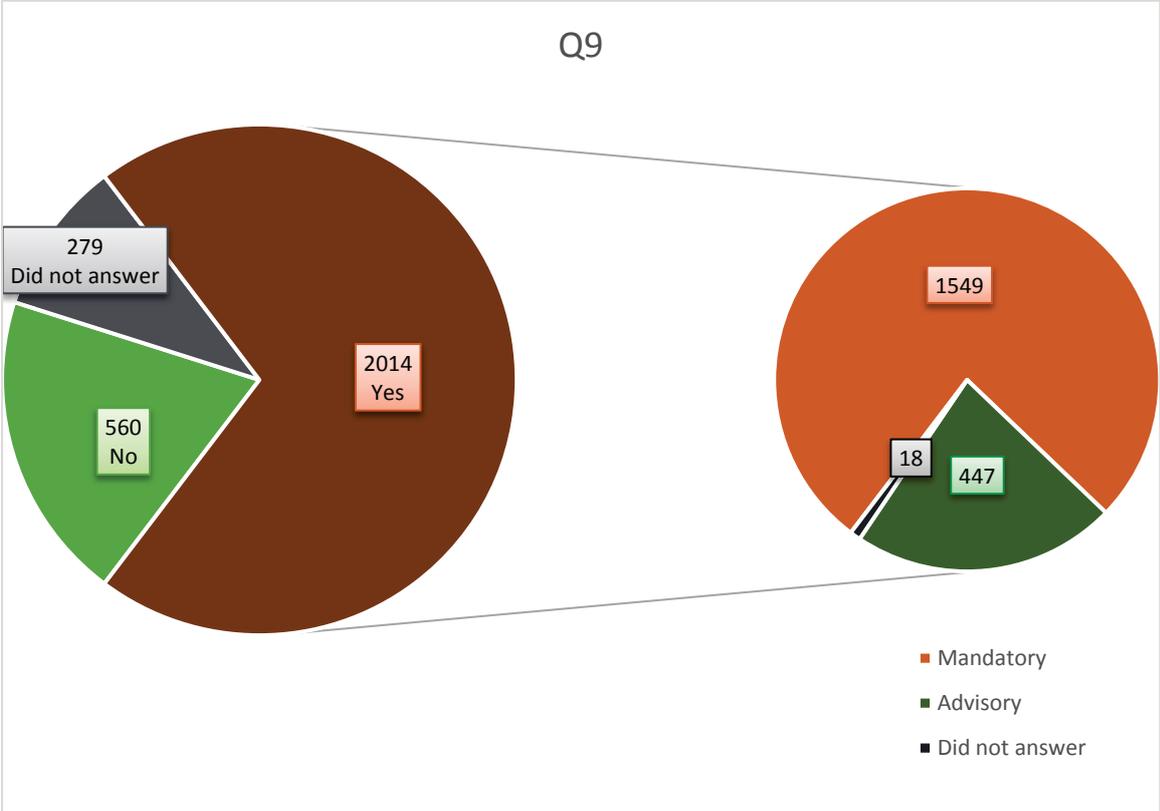
Q8. Do you agree that learner driver motorway lessons must only take place where the accompanying ADI has a dual control brake (and clutch in manual cars)?



2.25 The majority of responses agreed with the proposal that motorway lessons should only be provided to learner drivers in a dual controlled car.

2.26 This supports the safeguard outlined in our proposal.

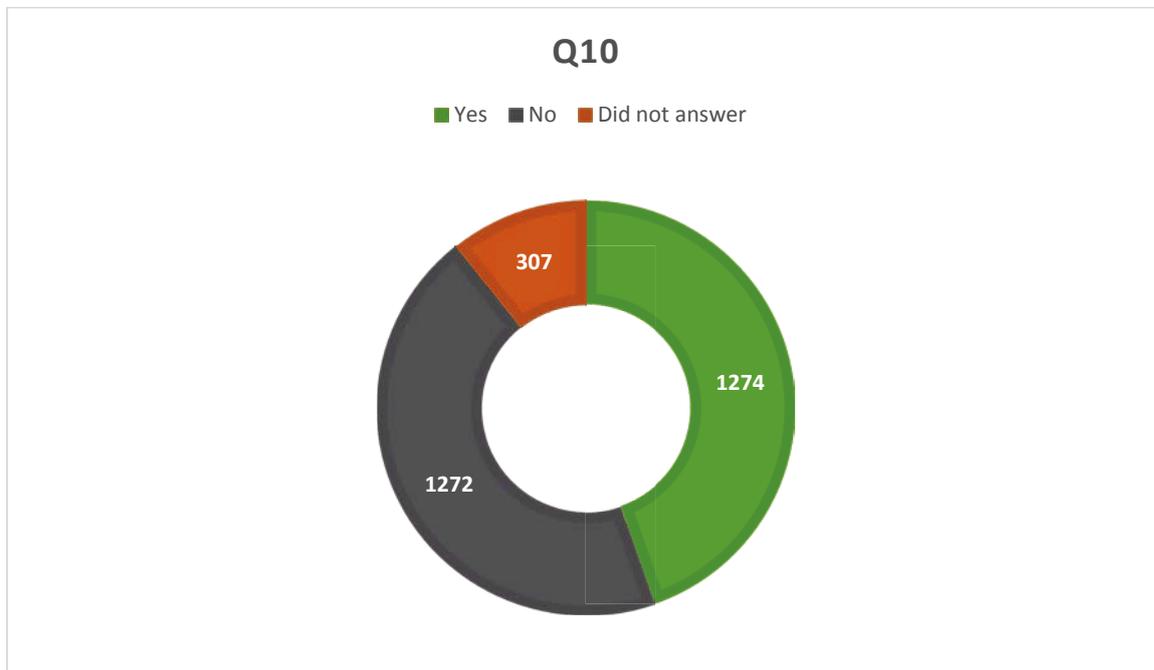
Q9. If people learning to drive in specially adapted vehicles wish to take motorway lessons, should these vehicles be fitted with dual controls? If yes, should this be advisory or mandatory?



2.27 A clear majority of respondents answered that specially adapted cars should be fitted with dual controls.

2.28 Of those that agreed, when asked if dual controls in specially adapted cars should be advisory or mandatory, most respondents thought that dual controls should be mandatory, although there was some support for this being advisory.

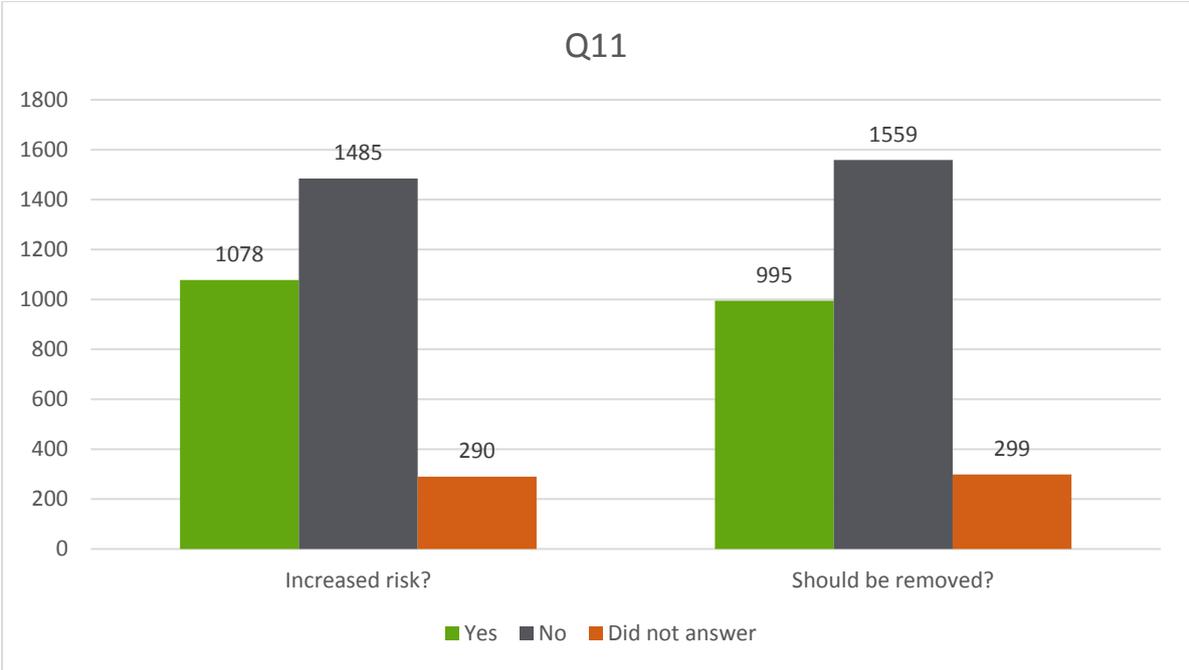
Q10. Do you agree that motorway lessons for learner drivers who are provisional licence holders should only be permitted in motor cars?



2.29 There was a split in responses for this question, with support for vehicles other than motor cars.

2.30 In supplementary comments, a number of responses stated that learner motorcyclists should also be allowed to take pre-test motorway lessons, when in convoy with an approved instructor.

**Q11. Do you agree that there is an increased risk using a top box on a motorway lesson and they should therefore be removed?**



- 2.31 The majority of responses did not think that there was an increased risk using a top box on a motorway lesson and likewise, did not agree that they should be removed.
- 2.32 In supplementary comments, many organisations and driving schools thought it was important to keep the top boxes so that people could easily identify learner drivers.
- 2.33 Supplementary comments illustrated the mixed views on this question:

*"My only concern is that if driving instructors do not display roof boxes, how can we be sure that the learner is accompanied by a qualified driving instructor? I think there is a risk that friends & family of the learner will take them onto motorways & that is potentially very dangerous."*

*"I use mine regularly on 70mph dual carriageways with no problem."*

*"I would suggest, however that learner rooftop boxes would be banned from use"*

*"We recommend that top boxes should be used, but caution should be applied in extreme weather conditions... Any screws or bolts should be checked regularly to ensure that the top box and base are firmly secured."*

**Q12. Do you have any comments on the potential financial impact of the proposal to allow learner drivers on motorways? If yes, please specify who you consider will be affected and provide examples of any costs, where applicable.**

2.34 Most respondents had no comment on the potential financial impact of allowing learner drivers to take motorway lessons. Where comments were provided, these have been grouped into themes, as shown in the chart below.



2.35 The majority of comments were supportive of the proposal from a financial aspect, stating that any costs that may arise would be justified or offset by the wider benefits of allowing learner drivers to use motorways in their lessons.

2.36 Some respondents thought that the proposal would result in higher running costs for the instructors, including increased insurance premiums. These costs would then be passed onto the learners by way of higher lesson costs.

2.37 A small number of comments referenced the potential cost of increased collisions as well as congestion on the motorway, if learner drivers were allowed to take lessons on them.

## 3. Focus groups with learner and novice drivers

- 3.1 In addition to the public consultation, we also commissioned focus groups with learner and novice drivers to get their views on this proposal. Focus groups are a form of qualitative research - the sample of drivers used in the study is not statistically representative but gives an understanding of views from a range of people.
- 3.2 The focus groups showed that:

The large majority of participants across both learner and novice driver groups reacted very positively to the idea of motorway driving lessons for learner drivers, thinking it was a very good idea. Reasons for the positive reaction included:

- It would make the first time on the motorway easier;
- It would boost confidence;
- There would be reduced motorway incidents;
- It would improve the quality of driving on motorways;
- No additional money would need to be spent on lessons after passing the test.

*“I don’t want to spend any more money on lessons, but because it’s part of the learning process, I feel like I’d be much more likely to do it and a lot of other people would be as well. Allowing people to go on motorways without some sort of formal training would be stupid.” (Novice Driver, Manchester, Male)*

*“That’s the main limitation of a learner driver, that you can’t go on the motorway and I think replicating real-life driving situations as a learner is probably the best way of learning, so I’d probably take it [the lessons] yes.” (Learner Driver, Guildford, Male)*

A small number of participants across the groups suggested that there may be some disadvantages to the proposal. Comments included:

- It could negatively impact other drivers on the motorway and annoy, frustrate or inconvenience them;
- It would cost money, which would particularly impact on those learning solely with friends and family;
- It may be unnecessary for those that are able to practice on a major dual carriageway as the experience is similar;
- Passing the driving test is what gives confidence to be able to go on the motorway;
- A bad experience during a motorway lesson may dent overall driving confidence;
- It may make novice drivers too confident and result in failure to seek advice or guidance when they should.

3.3 The results of the focus groups corresponded with the consultation responses; whilst some concerns were raised, overall most people felt that allowing learner drivers to have lessons on motorways was a good idea.

## 4. Conclusions

- 4.1 On the basis of the consultation response, there is clear support for allowing learner drivers on the motorway, provided they are accompanied by an Approved Driving Instructor and in a dual-controlled car.
- 4.2 For a small proportion of respondents, the changes proposed were deemed dangerous both for the learner drivers and other motorway users. We acknowledge these concerns but consider that a motorway lesson, with a fully qualified ADI at an appropriate stage when learning to drive, is better than the current situation where most drivers take to the motorway without any practical instruction on their use.
- 4.3 Young drivers aged between 17 and 24 are statistically over-represented in road accidents compared with drivers over 25 and a lack of experience is considered to be an important factor.
- 4.4 International research shows that increasing the amount of real world practice can better prepare learners for independent driving.
- 4.5 We want to improve driving standards and road safety; strengthened by the support received in this consultation, we therefore propose to go ahead with this deregulatory measure to enable learner drivers to have lessons on motorways.

### Decisions on implementation

- New regulations will lift the ban which prevents provisional licence holders from driving on motorways provided that they are:
  - Accompanied by a fully qualified ADI;
  - Driving a car (including specially adapted cars) with dual-controls.
- Motorway lessons will be optional and take place at the discretion of the ADI, when they consider that the learner driver is at an appropriate stage in their lessons.
- Trainee ADIs (PDIs) will not be permitted to offer motorway lessons
- The provision will only apply to motor cars.
- Drivers of specially adapted vehicles wishing to take motorway lessons may only do so in a car with dual-controls.
- ADIs will make their own decisions on signage as long as this complies with the existing requirements<sup>2</sup> and any products are used and maintained in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/1999/2864/schedule/4/made>

## Other issues raised during the consultation

### Mandatory lessons

- 4.6 We note suggestions for motorway lessons to be mandated post-test but this would require large scale changes to the licensing system. It is also likely that this would be more expensive for new drivers than embedding motorway driving in pre-test lessons. It is unclear how this would apply to drivers who do not have access to motorways, or for those drivers who don't wish to use motorways. This could create a barrier to gaining a full licence and would likely require a process to determine which new drivers would be permitted to drive on motorways.

### Motorcyclists

- 4.7 We note also the support for allowing motorway lessons for vehicles other than cars, particularly motorcycles. This consultation is part of wider work to improve safety outcomes of young and novice drivers, therefore we intend that the regulations will only apply to car drivers but we will continue to work to improve safety outcomes for all road user groups, including motorcyclists.

### ADI training and testing

- 4.8 A number of responses suggested that ADI training and testing could be strengthened, particularly around the syllabus and guidance for ADIs.
- 4.9 We recognise that training materials and the car driving syllabus will need to be amended to incorporate motorway lessons.
- 4.10 Motorway driving is already included in ADI training and testing. The ADI theory test has multiple-choice questions and a hazard perception exercise; motorway driving is already included in both sections.
- 4.11 The ADI practical driving test includes a test of the trainee ADI's driving ability. The test involves driving in varying road and traffic conditions, including motorways or dual carriageways where possible.
- 4.12 The DVSA has undertaken a range of measures to improve ADI standards, including:
- Introducing the 'standards check' in 2014 which changed the way DVSA assessed ADIs; focussing on assessing their competence to deliver effective training in line with the National Standard for driver and rider training.
  - Inviting ADIs to display their standards check grade on the 'find your nearest driving instructor' service on GOV.UK;
  - Encouraging ADIs to commit to continuous professional development which can also be recorded on the 'find your nearest' website
  - Improving the ADI part 3 test by moving to a competency based assessment and using 'real' pupils instead of role play, from October 2017.

### Guidance for ADIs

- 4.13 Guidance will be developed in conjunction with ADI associations, the DVSA and Highways England for those ADIs who would like additional support, including advice on appropriate signage such as roof-top boxes.

## **Pass Plus**

- 4.14 We note calls from several respondents to continue to promote post-test training. The Government recognises the value of post-test training in improving driving skills and building on practical experience. The DVSA will continue to support Pass Plus and new drivers will still be encouraged to take additional post-test training to develop their driving skills.

## **Consideration of a trial**

- 4.15 It was suggested that the Government consider a trial of allowing learners on motorways. We have considered this but feel a trial would be very difficult to deliver and enforce. Given this, it would not significantly add to an evaluation of the effectiveness of the rule change beyond what we can achieve through stringent monitoring following a national rule change. We propose that this monitoring will assess the uptake of pre-test motorway lessons and the subsequent effects on road safety. We will work with DVSA and Highways England to ensure that ADIs, learner drivers and other road users are prepared for the change.

## **Motorways and the practical driving test**

- 4.16 As noted at para 2.18, some responses to the consultation made reference to the learner driver practical driving test and some respondents suggested that motorway driving should be incorporated in the test.
- 4.17 It is not feasible to mandate motorway driving as part of the driving test because not all test centres have access to a motorway. However, there may be merit in including some motorway driving where possible, in the same way that current test routes incorporate driving on other high speed roads where practical. The DVSA reviews the content and format of the test and will monitor the uptake and impact of lessons on motorways with a view to considering the inclusion of motorway driving in the practical test in future.

## 5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Having reviewed the consultation responses, the Government has decided to bring forward legislation to remove the restrictions on learner drivers on motorways in certain circumstances.
- 5.2 It is intended that the change will come into effect during 2018. The arrangements will be well publicised beforehand, so that ADIs and learner drivers are prepared for the change and other road users know what to expect.
- 5.3 Once introduced, the changes will be carefully monitored and we will evaluate the impact of allowing learner drivers to take lessons on motorways.

## List of organisations who responded to the consultation

Accelerate Driver Training  
ADI National Joint Council  
AIM Driving Schools  
Amber School Of Motoring  
AMT Kickstart  
Association of South Eastern Driving Instructors (ASEDI)  
Autotrade International Ltd  
Avon and Somerset Constabulary  
BC's Driving School  
Betta Biker Rider Training Ltd  
Bolton Driver Training  
Brake, the road safety charity  
Brighton Driving Lessons  
British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF)  
BSM Driving School  
Bubble Driving School  
Cameroon Association for the Defence of Victims of Accidents (CADVA)  
Carcaptain driving schools  
Chiltern Learners  
Cornwall fire service  
Dartline Coaches  
Driving Instructors Association (DIA)  
Diamond Advanced Motorists  
DIDU Association  
Dillon Driving School  
Drive Learn Achieve (DLA)  
Drive With Storm Limited  
Drive2us.com  
Driver Trainer Network  
Driving Instructors Scottish Council (DISC)  
Eco Travel  
Edinburgh and Lothians Driving Instructors Association (ELDA)  
ELITE Driving Instructor Training Ltd  
Elliott's driving school  
Fastpass driving school  
Futura Training  
GEM Motoring Assist  
Glasgow Coach Drivers Ltd  
Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership  
Granada School Of Motoring  
Grovedriving Courses  
Hastings and Bexhill Motorcycle Training Scheme

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Highways England  
Horizon Travel - Coach Travel Company  
I Can School of Motoring  
IAM Road Smart  
Ideal Driver and Rider Training  
Institute of Master Tutors of Driving (IMTD)  
Kiss driving school  
Lancaster Training Services Ltd  
Learn2pass  
London Driving Instructors Association  
Martins Driving Academy  
MATCH training Ltd  
miDrive  
The Motor Schools Association of Great Britain (MSA GB)  
The National Associations Strategic Partnership (NASP)  
National Council on Inland Transport (NCIT)  
North Avon Driving Instructors' Association (NADIA)  
One Day Theory Test Pass  
Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS)  
PARR UK  
Police Scotland (Roads Policing)  
Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)  
The Royal Automobile (RAC) Foundation  
Recovair Fire and Rescue Services  
Red Amber Green Driving School  
Red Driving School  
Rev and Go - Registered Charity # 1086574  
Robbies Driving School  
The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)  
Around The Bend Driving School  
RSM Driving School  
SmartDriving  
Somerset County Council  
South Warwickshire Association of ADIs  
South Yorkshire Roads Partnership  
The Automobile Association (AA)  
Think Bike Training Ltd  
Tri-Coaching Partnership Limited  
Unite the union  
Wirral Association of Professional Driving Instructors (APDI)  
WSM Driver and Instructor Training

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The consultation is being conducted in line with the Government's key consultation principles which are listed below. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

If you have any comments about the consultation process please contact:

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