

Introducing a minimum learning period for learner drivers

Introduction

Thank you for responding to this consultation which is asking for your views on proposals to introduce mandatory requirements that learner drivers must meet before taking a practical driving test for a category B licence.

Closing date is 11 May 2026.

Accessibility statement

Read our [accessibility statement for SmartSurvey forms \[opens in a new window\]](#).

Data protection regulations

The Department for Transport (DfT) is running this consultation which is asking for your views on proposals to introduce mandatory requirements that learner drivers must meet before taking a practical driving test for a category B licence.

View our [DfT online form and survey privacy notice \[opens in a new window\]](#) for more information on how your personal data is processed in relation to this survey.

In addition we are asking about your relationship regarding cars and driving in order to better understand your connection to the topic.

Do not include personal information in your responses unless specifically requested.

Your information

1. What is your name?

2. What is your email address?

3. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes

No (Go to 'Individual detail')

Organisation details

4. Your organisation is a:

- car driving school
- road safety organisation
- another type of organisation:

[Now go to 'Proposal']

Individual details

5. You are:

- a car driver with a full licence who passed their car driving test more than 2 years ago
- a car driver with a full licence who has recently (within the last 2 years) passed their car driving test
- a learner car driver
- a parent of a learner car driver
- a guardian of a learner car driver
- a parent of a car driver with a full licence who has recently (within the last 2 years) passed their car driving test
- a guardian of a car driver with a full licence who has recently (within the last 2 years) passed their car driving test
- a parent of a car driver with a full licence who passed their car driving test more than 2 years ago
- a guardian of a car driver with a full licence who passed their car driving test more than 2 years ago
- an approved driving instructor (ADI)
- a trainee driving instructor
- an academic
- another type of person:

Proposal

We are seeking views on introducing a minimum time period between passing a theory test and taking a practical driving test for driving tests taken for a category B licence, the standard licence used to operate a car.

We are also seeking views on:

- introducing a minimum number of supervised practical driving hours
- creating a mandated learning syllabus
- the ways that any required learning could be conducted

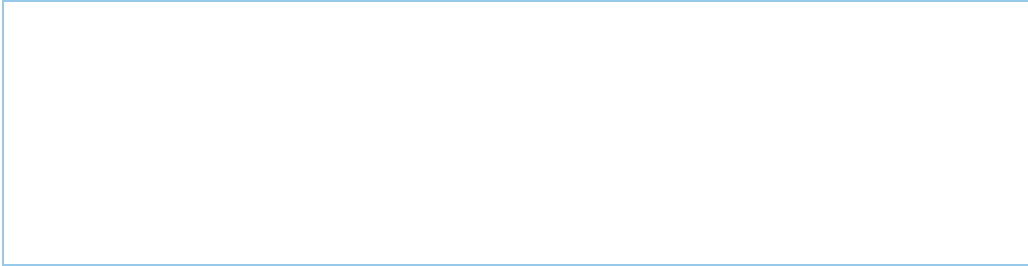
[Full information is in our consultation material \[opens in a new window\]](#).

6. In addition to holding a provisional licence and passing a theory test, do you agree or disagree with the introduction of further mandatory requirements for learner drivers before they can take a practical car driving test?

- Agree (Go to 'Further requirement age groups')
- Neither agree nor disagree (Go to 'Minimum learning time')
- Disagree
- Don't know (Go to 'Minimum learning time')

Against further mandatory requirements

7. Why not?



[Now go to 'Minimum learning time']

8. Why?

Road Safety GB supports the introduction of additional mandatory requirements for learner drivers before taking the practical driving test, as it recognises the value of proven interventions that enhance safety for new drivers.

Research consistently shows that minimum learning periods increase both the amount and diversity of supervised driving experience. International evidence from countries with Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) systems demonstrates reductions of 20–40% in collisions involving young drivers, highlighting the effectiveness of structured, phased approaches to gaining driving experience. For example, mandatory minimum learning periods in Victoria, Australia, significantly increased learner practice hours among 17–20-year-olds and extended learning across all age groups.

Because current evidence cannot reliably identify which novice drivers are at higher or lower risk, population level measures, such as mandatory minimum learning periods, offer the most equitable and effective way to improve safety for all new drivers. These approaches align with Road Safety GB's commitment to promoting informed policy, supporting behaviour change, and applying robust research to real world practice.

However, it is important to note that minimum learning period is not the same thing as Graduated Driving Licenses and does not mean that Graduated Driving Licenses are no longer needed. This proposal is one step towards a robust and safe licencing system.

Introducing a minimum learning period would ensure learners gain essential experience before driving independently. It would also likely improve first time test pass rates, easing pressure on the testing system and supporting better prepared candidates.

9. In your view what age of learner car driver should the further mandatory requirements be applied to?

- 17 to 19 year olds (and 16 year olds in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit) only
- 17 to 21 year olds (and 16 year olds in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit) only
- 17 to 25 year olds (and 16 year olds in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit) only
- All ages

Other age groups (including bracket if relevant):

10. Why?

Young drivers under 25 remain disproportionately involved in serious road collisions, and this age group is a priority in national safety performance indicators. Strengthening requirements for learners aged 25 and under would help address these elevated risks and support safer driving outcomes for this group.

Given the clear vulnerability of younger drivers and our organisational mission to reduce death and injury on Britain's roads through informed, research led practice, Road Safety GB endorses the introduction of additional mandatory measures for learner drivers aged 25 and under.

Minimum learning time

In minimum learning periods, learners are required to undergo a minimum time period before taking a practical car driving test or obtaining a full licence.

11. Do you agree or disagree that any new mandatory requirements should include a minimum learning time period between passing a theory test and being able to take a practical car driving test?

- Agree (Go to 'Minimum learning time period')
- Disagree
- Don't know (Go to 'Theory test certificate')

12. Why not?



[Now go to 'Theory test certificate']

Minimum learning time period

13. Why?

A minimum learning period would ensure learners have adequate time to develop practical driving skills and experience a range of real-world situations before taking the test. Embedding this experience after the theory test helps consolidate knowledge and reduces the risk of overconfidence among new drivers. From an administrative perspective, using the theory test pass date as the starting point offers a clear, consistent, and easily verifiable way to apply and enforce the requirement.

We recognise that additional mandatory requirements may present challenges, particularly for younger people whose employment, education, or social activities may depend on gaining a licence quickly. However, Road Safety GB's priority is to reduce death and injury on the roads, and the safety benefits of better prepared drivers outweigh these drawbacks.

14. In your view how long should the time period be?

3 months

6 months

9 months

12 months

Another number of months:

15. Why?

A nine-month period provides learners with a realistic and balanced timeframe to gain meaningful supervised driving experience, combining professional instruction with private practice across a variety of conditions. While longer experience can offer additional benefits, this duration represents a proportionate requirement that supports skill development without creating unnecessary barriers.

Survey evidence indicates public support for extended supervised learning, and young people themselves are open to changes that strengthen the learning to drive process. Although we recognise that extended learning periods may affect employment or social mobility for some young people, Road Safety GB believes that the safety benefits outweigh these drawbacks. Ensuring new drivers are better prepared directly contributes to our objective of reducing deaths and injuries on the roads.

Theory test certificate

16. In your view if we did introduce a minimum time period before a learner driver can take a practical car driving test, should the validity length of the theory test certificate be extended?

Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Minimum number of car driving hours')

17. Why?

The current two-year validity period of the theory test certificate can place unnecessary pressure on learners. This pressure could increase further if a minimum learning period is introduced, especially in areas with long wait times for practical tests. Extending the certificate validity would ease this pressure, giving learners sufficient time to meet new requirements and gain meaningful driving experience.

At the same time, as an industry, we can continue to support learners taking the theory test early, as building strong knowledge of the Highway Code and hazard perception is essential to safe driving.

Minimum number of car driving hours

For the next question driving hours are to be considered being completed with either:

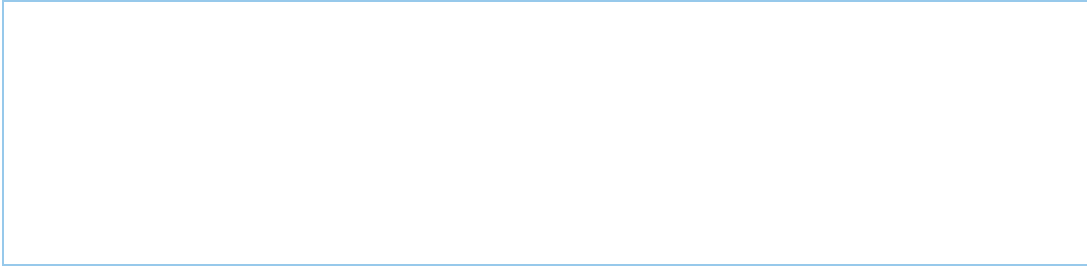
- an eligible supervising driver
- an approved driving instructor
- both an eligible supervising driver and an approved driving instructor

18. Do you agree or disagree that new mandatory learner requirements should include a minimum number of car driving hours?

- Agree (Go to 'Minimum number of car driving hours amount')
- Disagree
- Don't know (Go to 'Content of mandatory learner requirements')

Disagree with minimum number of car driving hours

19. Why not?



[Now go to 'Content of mandatory learner requirements']

Minimum number of car driving hours amount

20. Why?

Requiring a set number of hours, whether with an Approved Driving Instructor or through private practice, would help ensure all learners gain consistent, meaningful experience across the learning period. It would also prevent learners from compressing their practice into the weeks immediately before the test, supporting the development of safer, more confident new drivers.

21. In your view what should be the minimum required number of car driving hours?

40 hours

60 hours

80 hours

100 hours

120 hours

Another number of hours:

22. Why?

An 80-hour minimum sets a meaningful standard above what many learners already achieve, helping ensure they gain diverse, high-quality experience across different driving conditions. This supports the development of safer, more experienced novice drivers, fully aligned with Road Safety GB's focus on education, training and safe system.

We recognise that requiring 80 hours may create challenges for some learners, including pressures linked to education, employment or wider social commitments. However, the government must balance these practical concerns against the clear safety benefits of better prepared drivers. The priority remains reducing deaths and injuries on the roads and ensuring learners have sufficient time and experience to develop the complex skills needed for safe, independent driving.

Content of mandatory learner requirements

23. Do you agree or disagree that new mandatory learner requirements should include:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
a mandatory modular learning syllabus to complete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a mandatory logbook to complete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
mandatory e-learning to complete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why (referencing the appropriate statement or statements in your response):

A modular syllabus would help ensure that all essential elements of safe driving, not only those assessed in the practical test, are consistently covered. A mandatory logbook would support structured, documented practice across a broad range of driving environments, reflecting a focus on high-quality education and skills development. A strong syllabus is essential to ensure the learning period is put to constructive good use and not simply spent logging easy miles and waiting for a test date.

Mandatory e-learning would complement practical training by helping learners develop key cognitive skills such as hazard perception, hazard prediction as well as attitudes to risk taking and road sharing. These skills are central to Road Safety GB's emphasis on informed behaviour change and effective road safety education. Through our strong membership base, including Approved Driving Instructors, Road Safety GB is well placed to support consultation with the sector to ensure these measures are practical, deliverable and aligned with professional standards.

Exemption

Exemptions to any new mandatory requirements for learner drivers could be made in specific circumstances.

The [full circumstances and reasons are in the 'current licensing requirements' section of the consultation information \[opens in a new window\]](#).

24. In your view should some learner drivers be exempt from any new mandatory requirements for learner drivers?

- Yes
- No (Go to 'Mandatory learner requirements: offences')
- Don't know (Go to 'Mandatory learner requirements: offences')

Exemption criteria

25. In your view who should be exempt from any new mandatory requirements for learner drivers?

Foreign driving licence holders resident in GB

Those qualifying for disability benefits

Members of the Armed Forces

Drivers for the emergency services

Carers

Another set of people:

26. Why?

Foreign driving licence holders who take up residence in Great Britain already have prior driving experience and should therefore be exempt from new mandatory learner-driver requirements, such as minimum learning periods and mandatory hours. These individuals are not novice drivers in the same way as first-time learners in the UK.

However, Road Safety GB supports the continued requirement for all foreign licence holders to pass both the GB theory and practical tests before obtaining a full British licence. This ensures that they meet domestic standards, understand the Highway Code, and can demonstrate safe driving behaviour in the UK road environment.

Exempting experienced foreign drivers from the new learner-specific rules achieves an appropriate balance. It avoids imposing unnecessary barriers on people with established driving histories who may rely on driving for employment, education, or family responsibilities, while still maintaining robust safety checks through the existing testing process.

27. In your view how should exemptions be applied?

Individual applies for exemption with proof of exemption eligibility

Individual makes self-declaration without proof of eligibility

Another way:

Mandatory learner requirements: offences

Under British road traffic legislation, an individual's driving licence can be withdrawn for a number of reasons.

These reasons are [stated and discussed in the 'driving licence revocation, disqualifications and potential MLP impacts' section of our consultation information \[opens in a new window\]](#).

28. Do you agree or disagree that any new mandatory learner requirements should apply to a driver:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
whose licence is revoked for receiving at least six penalty points during their probationary period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
who has been disqualified from driving for committing motoring offences and has been ordered by a court to retake a driving test (ordinary or extended)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Why (referencing the appropriate statement or statements in your response):

Road Safety GB selected "don't know" because this issue does not fall within the remit of the organisation. Our role is to provide leadership, training, and evidence-based guidance on road safety and driver behaviour, not to determine or comment on matters that sit outside our professional scope or expertise. In these areas, it is appropriate for Road Safety GB to refrain from giving a position and allow the responsible authorities or specialist bodies to lead.

29. Any other comments?

Road Safety GB encourages the government to consider post-test safeguarding measures to complement improvements to the learner-driver system. Newly qualified drivers face a particularly high-risk period as they begin driving independently, and additional safeguards can help reduce collisions and protect young drivers.

The language used in this work is important. Words such as 'safeguarding' or 'enhancing' should be used rather than 'restrictions' or 'constraints'.

Evidence from countries with progressive or graduated licensing systems shows that measures such as night-time driving restrictions and limits on carrying peer-aged passengers can significantly reduce crash risk for new drivers.

Introducing proportionate post-test measures would strengthen the transition from learning to independent driving, support safer behaviours, and deliver meaningful safety benefits for young and inexperienced drivers.

Also, prior to the start of a practical driving test a breath test and drug swipe could be undertaken. At a determined level it could deem it inappropriate to continue with the practical test. Costs could be covered by individuals. It could be introduced on a random test basis.