

The Novice Drivers Report

*A report for IAM in the interests of newly qualified
drivers and their safety on the roads*

NOVEMBER 2007

The logo for Consumer Analysis Limited, featuring the company name in white text on a magenta square background.

Consumer
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THE INTERVIEWEES

The sample for the survey includes 1000 drivers who have recently passed or failed their driving test in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In lengthy telephone interviews they were asked to share their thoughts about how the safety of new drivers could be improved.

The fieldwork was carried out during November 2007.

Regional figures match the density of population. Figures may not add up to 100 due to rounding up.

Gender

Male	442	41%
Female	628	59%
Total	1070	100%

Age

School 17-18	219	21%
Students 19-21	257	24%
Young people 22-25	157	14%
Over 25s	432	41%
Total	1065	100%

Region

London	137	13%
South East	178	17%
South West	111	10%
East Anglia	69	6%
East Midlands	64	6%
West Midlands	82	8%
Wales	64	6%
Yorkshire & Humberside	89	8%
North East	53	5%
North West	125	12%
Scotland	84	8%
Northern Ireland	15	1%
Total	1071	100%

THE FINDINGS

1. Did you pass or fail the driving test the last time you took it?

Passed	79%
Failed	21%

By gender

	Male	Female
Passed	81%	78%
Failed	19%	22%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Passed	64%	84%	83%	81%
Failed	36%	16%	17%	19%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Pass	78%	82%	80%	74%	74%	77%	73%	82%	81%	86%	74%	87%
Fail	22%	18%	20%	26%	26%	23%	27%	18%	19%	14%	26%	13%

2. Do you think the practical driving test is...?

Too hard	14%
Too easy	10%
About right	76%

By gender

	Male	Female
Too hard	13%	15%
Too easy	14%	7%
About right	73%	78%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Too hard	9%	34%
Too easy	12%	2%
About right	79%	64%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Too hard	16%	18%	19%	9%
Too easy	5%	7%	5%	15%
About right	78%	75%	76%	76%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Too hard	21%	13%	14%	10%	19%	14%	12%	14%	8%	15%	13%	0%
Too easy	10%	9%	10%	13%	11%	4%	3%	11%	13%	10%	12%	13%
About right	69%	78%	76%	77%	70%	82%	84%	75%	79%	75%	75%	87%

Comments:

Sakara, 19, student, Portsmouth: "I think it must be too easy. There seem to be more bad drivers on the road recently."

Andy, 22, policeman, Bristol. "I think it's about ticking boxes. You learn how to be able to pass the test."

Daniel, 24, carpenter, Hampshire: "Too hard - there are a lot of things on the test that don't seem necessary to be honest."

3. Do you think younger drivers would be safer and eventually better drivers if they had to wait until they are 18 before they take the practical test?

Yes	57%
No	35%
Don't know	8%

By gender

	Male	Female
Yes	53%	59%
No	39%	33%
Don't know	8%	8%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Yes	59%	53%
No	35%	32%
Don't know	6%	15%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Yes	27%	47%	55%	78%
No	63%	44%	37%	16%
Don't know	9%	9%	8%	7%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Yes	59%	49%	53%	70%	59%	54%	61%	66%	42%	55%	58%	80%
No	38%	45%	33%	25%	36%	35%	27%	28%	51%	35%	32%	20%
Don't know	3%	6%	14%	6%	5%	11%	13%	6%	8%	10%	10%	0%

Comments:

Katie, 17, Milton Keynes: "I would not want to wait until I was 18, but I can see how it would help, bearing in mind statistics for young drivers."

Sakara, 19, student, Portsmouth: "I took my test at 17, and am a pretty good driver."

Alec, 22, Manchester; "I think people should pass if they are good enough, not be judged by age."

Aaron, 21, Portsmouth: "I think the longer you leave it, the better driver you will probably become."

Robert, 19, apprentice plasterer, Thirsk: "Yes, you will be more mature. I would have been."

Kerry, 26, housewife, Wigan: "It should be 21 for boys."

4. What do you feel about the idea of a psychological profile test being carried out as part of the theory test (called psychometric testing)? This would help to weed out the small percentage of potentially dangerous drivers – people whose psychological make-up makes them unfit to be on the road.

Think this is a good idea, and would have been happy to do it on my theory test	58%
Think this is a bad idea, and wouldn't have agreed to it on my theory test	30%
Don't know	13%

By gender

	Male	Female
Think this is a good idea	55%	60%
Think this is a bad idea	35%	26%
Don't know	10%	14%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Think this is a good idea	57%	55%
Think this is a bad idea	32%	26%
Don't know	11%	19%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Think this is a good idea	53%	58%	50%	63%
Think this is a bad idea	28%	35%	39%	24%
Don't know	18%	7%	11%	14%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Good idea	53%	57%	40%	52%	66%	57%	67%	58%	45%	66%	73%	73%
Bad idea	39%	29%	45%	35%	23%	29%	17%	31%	42%	19%	15%	20%
Don't know	8%	13%	15%	13%	11%	13%	16%	10%	13%	14%	12%	7%

Comments:

Aaron, 21, Portsmouth: "This would depend on how far you could trust the tests, and I'm pretty sure you would not be able to stop accidents by doing such tests."

Ruhon, 23, Hampshire: "I don't know anyone who would agree to doing a psychological test like this."

5. Do you think it would be a good idea to stop learners from practising with their parents, or partners, or friends...so that they only have lessons from qualified instructors?

Learners should only have lessons from qualified instructors	22%
Learners should be able to learn with parents, partners, friends as long as they have some lessons with a qualified instructor	61%
Learners should be able to learn with parents, partners or friends and not be forced to have any lessons with a qualified instructor	15%
Don't know	2%

By gender

	Male	Female
Learners should only have lessons from qualified instructors	24%	21%
Learners should be able to learn with parents as long as they have some lessons with a qualified instructor	55%	65%
Learners should be able to learn with parents and not be forced to have lessons with a qualified instructor	19%	12%
Don't know	2%	2%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Learners should only have lessons from qualified instructors	23%	20%
Learners should be able to learn with parents as long as they have some lessons with a qualified instructor	61%	58%
Learners should be able to learn with parents and not be forced to have lessons with a qualified instructor	15%	15%
Don't know	1%	7%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Should learn from qualified instructors	13%	18%	18%	30%
Should have some lessons with an instructor	68%	59%	61%	59%
Learners should be able to learn with parents	17%	21%	19%	9%
Don't know	3%	2%	3%	2%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Qualified instruction	23%	19%	22%	22%	22%	18%	25%	31%	17%	19%	26%	40%
Some instruction	51%	64%	54%	59%	61%	72%	67%	63%	57%	66%	55%	53%
Learn with parents	25%	15%	19%	13%	16%	7%	8%	6%	26%	13%	15%	7%
Don't know	1%	2%	5%	6%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	4%	0%

Comments:

Sarah, 21, Farnborough: "I think you can pick up bad habits from your parents."

Daniel, 24, carpenter, Hampshire: "I think in money terms it's better to have parents but I think you do always need some professional help."

Miss J, 28, mortgage advisor, Wales: "I think people should only go out with family or friends on quiet roads when they're learning."

Mr S, 19, East Anglia: "Lessons can be quite expensive. My friend learnt to drive with his parents and never took a driving lesson with an instructor and is a good driver."

6. Given the high possibility of an accident in the first year after passing the test, do you think new drivers should not be allowed to have more than one passenger in the car at any one time during their first year of driving?

Yes	33%
No	58%
Don't know	10%

By gender

	Male	Female
Yes	34%	32%
No	58%	57%
Don't know	8%	10%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Yes	33%	32%
No	59%	53%
Don't know	8%	15%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Yes	26%	23%	25%	45%
No	67%	69%	67%	43%
Don't know	7%	8%	8%	12%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Yes	33%	32%	34%	30%	44%	28%	41%	30%	34%	26%	36%	40%
No	60%	60%	56%	59%	47%	60%	54%	66%	60%	59%	49%	47%
Don't know	7%	8%	10%	10%	9%	12%	5%	3%	6%	15%	15%	13%

Comments:

Katie, 17, Milton Keynes: "You can get distracted if there are a few passengers in the car."

Tasha, 17, Stockport: "I don't think new drivers should be allowed to go out with a car full of friends. It would be hard to concentrate, but one or two would be ok."

Katherine, 21, Wales: "Three boys from my old school were killed as passengers in a car driven by a new driver."

7. Similarly, do you think new drivers should have a no-alcohol-at-all ban during their first year of driving?

Yes	76%
No	20%
Don't know	5%

By gender

	Male	Female
Yes	75%	76%
No	21%	18%
Don't know	4%	6%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Yes	77%	72%
No	20%	18%
Don't know	4%	10%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Yes	61%	73%	75%	85%
No	33%	22%	20%	11%
Don't know	6%	5%	4%	5%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Yes	78%	67%	74%	72%	84%	66%	84%	84%	74%	74%	82%	80%
No	19%	26%	20%	22%	11%	27%	11%	12%	25%	21%	13%	13%
Don't know	3%	6%	6%	6%	5%	7%	5%	3%	2%	5%	5%	7%

Comments:

Miss H, 19, East Anglia: "Younger drinkers probably find it difficult to know their limit of how much alcohol they can take."

Mrs R, 28, Wales: "New drivers should have an alcohol ban because it affects your concentration and you don't have as much confidence in your first year of driving."

Mr S, 19, East Anglia: "When you are young you are more likely to be tempted to drink and drive."

8. Currently, learner drivers are not allowed on motorways, but as soon as they pass the test they can drive on motorways. Would you like to have gained some experience of motorway driving before you took the test?

Yes, but only with a qualified instructor	58%
Yes, with an instructor or another driver	29%
No	11%
Don't know	3%

By gender

	Male	Female
Yes, but only with a qualified instructor	55%	60%
Yes, with an instructor or another driver	27%	30%
No	15%	8%
Don't know	3%	2%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Yes, but only with a qualified instructor	58%	58%
Yes, with an instructor or another driver	28%	30%
No	12%	5%
Don't know	1%	8%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Yes, with a qualified instructor	53%	52%	53%	66%
Yes, with instructor or driver	28%	30%	33%	26%
No	15%	16%	12%	6%
Don't know	4%	2%	2%	2%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Yes, with instructor	55%	54%	49%	64%	64%	61%	67%	66%	49%	57%	60%	67%
Yes, with instructor/ driver	36%	33%	29%	26%	28%	26%	25%	17%	36%	26%	24%	33%
No	7%	10%	15%	6%	8%	11%	6%	15%	15%	14%	14%	0%
Don't know	2%	3%	6%	4%	0%	2%	2%	2%	0%	2%	2%	0%

Comments:

Sarah, 21, Farnborough: "I have not driven on a motorway yet, and I passed my test 18 months ago."

Sakara, 19, student, Portsmouth: "I had to take some lessons after I passed to help me cope with driving on the motorways."

Simone, 24, student, Southport: "I found it really strange that you had to answer questions about motorway driving in the theory test, even though you weren't allowed to drive on motorways."

Aaron, 21, Portsmouth: "I don't know, because if you had any lessons on it you may need to be tested on it, which would mean an even longer process to pass."

9. Similarly, would you have liked to have gained some experience of night driving before you took the test?

Yes, but only with a qualified instructor	48%
Yes, with an instructor or another driver	39%
No	11%
Don't know	3%

By gender

	Male	Female
Yes, but only with a qualified instructor	46%	49%
Yes, with an instructor or another driver	35%	41%
No	16%	7%
Don't know	3%	3%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Yes, but only with a qualified instructor	46%	49%
Yes, with an instructor or another driver	38%	41%
No	13%	4%
Don't know	2%	6%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Yes, but only with a qualified instructor	44%	42%	44%	55%
Yes, with an instructor or another driver	39%	39%	46%	36%
No	13%	15%	10%	7%
Don't know	4%	5%	1%	2%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Yes, with instructor	45%	37%	36%	59%	56%	57%	55%	52%	36%	52%	55%	53%
Yes, with instructor/ driver	42%	47%	45%	23%	36%	33%	38%	32%	47%	33%	38%	47%
No	9%	12%	14%	10%	8%	7%	6%	16%	13%	12%	5%	0%
Don't know	3%	3%	5%	7%	0%	2%	2%	0%	4%	3%	2%	0%

Comments:

Channing, 19, nursery nurse, Brackney: "I wish I could have had some night driving experience with my instructor."

Richard, 22, Manchester: "My first lesson was at night, but I don't think it's essential."

10. Do you think you are less likely to crash if you have a smaller-engined, less powerful car?

Yes, less likely to crash	36%
No, more likely to crash	5%
Makes no difference	52%
Don't know	7%

By gender

	Male	Female
Yes, less likely to crash	41%	33%
No, more likely to crash	7%	3%
Makes no difference	48%	55%
Don't know	4%	8%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Yes, less likely to crash	36%	36%
No, more likely to crash	6%	2%
Makes no difference	53%	51%
Don't know	5%	11%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Yes, less likely to crash	32%	39%	39%	36%
No, more likely to crash	5%	6%	6%	3%
Makes no difference	53%	48%	52%	55%
Don't know	10%	7%	3%	6%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Yes, less likely to crash	40%	33%	37%	38%	27%	33%	34%	33%	40%	41%	39%	60%
No, more likely to crash	4%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	8%	4%	2%	8%	4%	7%
Makes no difference	45%	55%	51%	52%	63%	52%	55%	61%	55%	48%	49%	33%
Don't know	12%	7%	7%	6%	6%	10%	3%	2%	4%	3%	8%	0%

Comments:

Nicola, 21, hairdresser, Liverpool: "It makes no difference. It depends on your driving and how good you are at it."

Sophie, 17, Cramlington: "I think it depends on the driver."

11. Are you aware of further driver education courses that are available after you have passed the test (eg Pass Plus)?

NB: Interviewees could give more than one answer

Yes, was told by my instructor	54%
Yes, was told by someone in my family	18%
Yes, was told by other friends who drive	17%
Yes, I'm aware but no one told me	17%
Don't know about them	13%

By gender

	Male	Female
Yes, was told by my instructor	55%	53%
Yes, was told by someone in my family	20%	17%
Yes, was told by other friends who drive	16%	19%
Yes, I'm aware but no one told me	19%	15%
Don't know about them	12%	14%

By test success

	Passed	Failed
Yes, was told by my instructor	58%	43%
Yes, was told by someone in my family	18%	17%
Yes, was told by other friends who drive	17%	18%
Yes, I'm aware but no one told me	17%	14%
Don't know about them	10%	25%

By age group

	School 17-18	Students 19-21	Young people 22-25	Over 25s
Yes, was told by my instructor	66%	73%	60%	33%
Yes, was told by someone in my family	25%	18%	15%	16%
Yes, was told by other friends who drive	28%	18%	21%	11%
Yes, I'm aware but no one told me	7%	9%	12%	27%
Don't know about them	9%	5%	12%	20%

By region

	LON	SE	SW	E Ang	E Mids	W Mids	Wal	Y & H	NE	NW	Scot	N.I.
Told by instructor	55%	69%	53%	46%	47%	57%	48%	55%	51%	52%	43%	13%
Told by family member	24%	23%	10%	13%	14%	20%	19%	18%	15%	20%	12%	20%
Told by friends	16%	24%	14%	12%	13%	17%	21%	11%	21%	19%	22%	7%
Aware but no one told me	10%	13%	21%	21%	20%	10%	19%	19%	23%	15%	22%	27%
Don't know about them	14%	6%	15%	18%	14%	11%	11%	10%	13%	16%	17%	47%

Comments:

Jordan, 17, Glasgow: "I was told on the computer when I took my theory test."

Miss J, 28, mortgage advisor, Wales: "One of my colleagues did Pass Plus and it definitely made him a better driver."

Katie, 17, Milton Keynes: "I am going to do a Pass Plus when I have finished."

James, 22, disk jockey, Merseyside: "My insurance company told me about the Pass Plus."

Laura, 21, East Anglia: "I would have taken one if it meant my insurance was cheaper."