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# Students give Backing to DSA Consultation

Driving Standards Agency (Wales) Driving Standards Agency consultation to reach Cardiff on Friday, 25 July

Cardiff University's Formula Student Team have thrown their ing behind the DSA's 'Safe Driving for Life' consultation. They are urging road users across South Wales to have their views heard on proposals for improved driver training and testing.

A Cardiff Hotel hosts the South Wales & Gwent regional event, one of 13 free events across England, Scotland and Wales.

A three-hour forum takes place at 6pm, at the Holland House Hotel, Newport Road on July 25, and tea and coffee will be provided. Views and ideas will be gathered and fed directly to policy makers. Latest figures show that in 2006, 270 people were killed or seriously injured on roads in North Wales (Isle of Anglesey 29, Gwynedd 60, Conwy 53, Denbighshire 35, Flintshire 47, Wrexham 46.)

A further 421 were killed or seriously injured in Dyfed-Powys (Powys 143, Ceredigion 67, Pembrokeshire 101, Carmarthenshire 110)

It is for this reason that the Formula Student team have added their voices to that of Formula One star David Coulthard, who is also urging people across South Wales and Gwent to attend. He said: 'One in five deaths on British roads involves newly-qualified drivers. I was appalled to hear that the statistics are so high. I know how much young people enjoy the freedom that driving brings, but it is also a huge responsibility that must be taken seriously. 'Changing the way that people are taught to drive, and making the test more real, can only be of benefit. The Government has set out proposals to change this system - and now it's up to you to have your say. We all use our roads in one way or another so it is important you register your view before the consultation closes.' Cardiff University's Formula Student team have been undergoing a transitional year, and have recently finished 38th of 82 entries in the international competition held at Silverstone Race Circuit. Team Leader Ifan Evans, who is currently studying to for his Engineering Doctorate, explained: 'Formula Student is not just about racing single seaters. A majority of the rule that we have to adhere to are to ensure the safety of the driver and other competitors. For example, there needs to be a high degree of structural integrity to the car, but it also needs to be designed to disseminate force in the event of an impact. We are also limited to a 650cc engine, and a number of other technical requirements that mean our top speed cannot get much above 70 mph. 'Obviously, everyday road cars are also built with safety in mind. As we all know, there is always an element of risk involved in driving, and that is why we support the DSA's efforts to ensure that new drivers are supported to be as safe as possible

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before being awarded their full licences' Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly launched proposals on May 7 for updating and improving the learning to drive and testing process.

She is keen to look at the way drivers are trained and tested with the objective of ensuring newly-qualified drivers possess the safety skills needed to drive on Britain's busy roads.

During the consultation the DSA aims to gather opinions on a range of proposals, including;

- \* Changes to the theory test
- \* Making the practical test more realistic
- \* Providing a pre driver qualification in road safety
- \* Introducing a student workbook
- \* Providing more information to help choose a driving instructor Remember, numbers are limited and places are allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

Visit <http://www.dsa.gov.uk/learningtodrive> and book your place now.

You can also share your views online via the same website. ground: Transport secretary Ruth Kelly announced proposals for a consultation to reform the way people learn to drive and how they are tested on May 7.

The aim of the four-month consultation period is to gather views of motorists and learners with the aim of strengthening future learning and testing procedures.

The outline proposals were formed following extensive discussions with young people, employers, driving instructors and the insurance industry.

The Department for Transport announced plans in February 2007 to consult on fundamental reform of driver training and testing as part of the second review of its road safety strategy<sup>1</sup>.

The review promised a new framework for driver education, training, testing and lifelong learning, including developing and refreshing skills, remedial training, work-related driving and support for drivers at various stages of their driving career to develop and maintain safe driving for life.

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### Key facts about learning to drive (all for Great Britain)

- \* Two million people take a car driving test every year.
- \* The pass rate is 44%, so the average learner takes more than two tests before passing.
- \* 750,000 people qualify for a license every year - three quarters of these are under the age of 25.
- \* Current average cost of a lesson is approximately 21 - up to 28 in London. \* The average learner has 52 hours of lessons and spends 1,500 learning to drive.
- \* Current fees for the driving test (for a car) are 30 for the theory test (which includes the hazard perception test); 56.50 for the practical test (67 if you want an evening or weekend).
- \* A newly qualified male driver faces an insurance premium from 1,200; and a female driver of same age faces a premium from 800. \* The current car driving test is in two parts -
- \* The theory test - a multiple-choice answer knowledge assessment (since 1996); and a computer screen-based hazard perception test (since 2002).
- \* The practical test - of general driving on the road and standard maneuvers (the three-point turn, reversing round a corner, and emergency stop): this part of the test also includes an eye sight test, and a 'show me-tell me' test of knowledge of the car (since 2003) Main points in reform proposals

The Department proposes to reform the way people learn to drive, and the way they are tested. This means:

- \* a driving test that gives a more realistic and rounded assessment of whether someone is fit to drive alone;
- \* more focused and efficient learning, with greater clarity about what is required, so learners should not face any increase in costs;
- \* better training and testing of driving instructors and better information for the public on instructors' qualifications and performance
- \* a wider range of opportunities for drivers to acquire skills and demonstrate that they have done so, both before and after they qualify, creating a culture of lifelong learning and driver

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development.

Safer and better newly-qualified drivers will see as a result:

- \* lower numbers of accidents;
- \* higher levels of learner satisfaction;
- \* more opportunities and greater incentives for post-test learning, with this becoming increasingly common;
- \* higher levels of employer confidence in the driving test and driving qualifications;
- \* lower insurance costs for drivers who have taken advantage of a wider range of learning options, both pre and post test, to improve their competence. Timing \* Consultation on the proposals runs for 16 weeks up to 8 September.
- \* Some trialing for new elements in the test is already in progress, and work is advanced on the new syllabus.
- \* No changes will be made to the test until they may be assessed; and there will be a full programme of evaluation thereafter.
- \* The Driving Standards Agency plan that young people will be able to start studying for a foundation qualification in safe road use from Autumn 2008. Other pieces of the programme - such as changes to the driving tests - could be in place within two or three years.

Proposals for changing the test

- \* The theory test will be updated to test understanding of safe driving, and include case studies.
- \* The hazard perception test will be reformed to encourage learners to take it when they have some on-road experience. The use of 3D animation clips instead of film is being considered.
- \* The practical test will be changed by introducing independent driving when the candidate finds the route and 'situational judgement' when the candidate is asked to explain what they did in a situation and why.
- \* The Driving Standards Agency is looking at splitting the theory and practical tests into

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modules, to enable learners to pass elements of the test as they learn. Re-takes could also be done in the same way.

\* Candidates will be offered better feed at all stages of the test, whether successful or not.

\* The Driving Standards Agency is also exploring a new marking system for the practical test to make it more effective and consistent.

#### Improved learning and better information

\* The Driving Standards Agency will -

- publish a new syllabus for safe driving;

- produce a work book for learners to encourage driving experience in bad weather, at night etc.

- introduce a star rating system for driving instructors. Learners will be able to use a website to get straightforward information about the quality of driving instructors - for example, trainee pass rates; training taken by instructors and the number of candidates an instructor has taken to test.

- review the programme for driving instructor training and to focus on those areas of driving behaviour and performance that have the closest link to safe driving.

#### Additional learning and qualifications

\* The Driving Standards Agency is developing a certificate on safe road use for young people from age 14 to 16. A pilot is being worked up with Scottish Qualifications Authority, potentially available from the 2008/09 academic year.

\* The certificate on safe road use will cover the Highway Code, planning journeys, social attitude, peer pressure, fatigue, being safe on road, eco-driving. The aim is to make it an optional course available from age 14.

\* The Driving Standards Agency is developing a non-compulsory Attitude Advisor - a computer-based self-evaluation aid that helps make learners aware of their attitude towards risk and safety. Learners are asked to respond to questions about their reaction to different situations, allowing the programme to build up a profile of their overall attitude which can be used by the learner and instructor to improve their driving.

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\* The Pass Plus scheme will be reviewed to create safer drivers and improve take-up (11% take up Pass Plus each year)

\* The Driving Standards Agency is working with organisations providing advanced training on a consistent standard for all post-test training.

\* Additional, vocational qualifications will be developed jointly with employers for people who want to drive for work e.g. covering loading, unloading, driving a van and customer service. These will be offered through awarding bodies rather like an NVQ.

\* New standards for post-test and driving for work training will be developed with employers and insurers. Better information about driving instructors and improved instructor training

\* The Driving Standards Agency will introduce a star rating system so that learners will be able to access straightforward information about the quality of driving instructors: this will include customers' pass rates, and the training instructors have received - as well as the instructor's grade; \* The Driving Standards Agency are already working with instructors' organisations to review the way driving instructors are trained and tested, before they qualify and after they are registered. Notes to Editors: 1. The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) is an executive agency \* of the Department for Transport.

2. The DSA's vision is 'Safe Driving for Life' with an overall mission to contribute towards a Government target of achieving a 40% reduction in riders and drivers killed or seriously injured in road accidents, in the age group up to 24 years, by 2010.

3. Current information on road casualties is available from the Department for Transport website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk>

4. The Agency's aim is to promote road safety through setting standards for drivers, riders and trainers, testing drivers and riders fairly and efficiently, maintaining the registers of Approved Driving Instructors; Large Goods Vehicle Instructors; Fleet Trainers; Driving Instructor Trainers and Post Test Motorcycle Trainers; supervising Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) for learner motorcyclists; and driver education and the provision of learning resources.

5. DSA is a trading fund \* with an expected turnover of around 199 million for the year 2008/9, fully funded by fee income and revenue from its activities.

6. DSA employs over 2,700 staff, of which some 2,000 are driving examiners based at over 400 test centres across mainland Great Britain. In 2007/2008 the Agency conducted 1.8 million

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practical tests for car drivers, over 95,000 vocational tests and 94,000 motorcycle rider tests. A total of 1.7 million theory tests were carried out at 158 centres. At the end of the year there were around 43,600 people on the Register of Approved Driving Instructors.

7. DSA was one of the first Government Agencies to introduce an online booking service. Candidates can book and manage their theory and practical test appointments on line at <http://www.direct.gov.uk/drivingtest>

8. For more information of Formula Student, visit <http://www.formulastudent.com>

\* Executive agency:

An executive agency is semi-detached from its parent department and manages its own budget with freedom from ad hoc, day to day intervention and much of central, government-wide regulation. They are run under the organisation and direction of a Chief Executive recruited through open competition. An executive agency has accountability for the performance of specific operational tasks as a corporate unit, including focused performance targets set by the parent department and personal accountability of the chief executive for performance.

\* Trading Fund:

A trading fund is a means of financing trading activities undertaken by Government that would previously have been financed by annual appropriation from Parliament. A trading fund permits the establishment of a self-accounting unit that remains under the control and management of Ministers and accountable to Parliament through Ministers, but has greater freedom to manage its financial affairs. Effectively that means the trading fund body can use its income to settle its liabilities and retain year-end cash balances. Establishing the trading fund does not alter the Agency's constitutional position and it remains part of the Department for Transport.

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<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=374835&NewsAreaID=2>