

**Graduated Driver Licence Scheme Bill 2013-14,
Second Reading, House of Commons,
25th October 2013**



PACTS Briefing

What is the Graduated Driver Licence Scheme Bill 2013-14?

Justin Tomlinson, Member for North Swindon, has introduced a Private Members' Bill, the [Graduated Driver Licence Scheme Bill 2013-14](#). It is due to receive its second reading on Friday (25th October). The Bill proposes amendments to the Road Traffic Act 1988 in order to limit risks to newly-qualified drivers, their passengers and other road users during and after the learning period. The key proposal is an intermediary stage – a newly-qualified driver's licence - between the learner licence and the full licence. During this phase, drivers would be permitted to carrying no more than one passenger and be subject to a lower permitted alcohol limit (5 micrograms in 100 millilitres of breath – effectively zero).

These measures would result in significant reductions in death and injury, particularly for young drivers, their passengers and other road users. PACTS supports these proposals.

Why is GDL necessary?

Driving on Great Britain's roads today is a complex task. Errors can prove expensive and even fatal, particularly where young and inexperienced drivers are involved.

Youth and inexperience are both significant risk. However, the risks are factors substantially higher for *young* drivers.

- Department for Transport [data](#) show that one fifth of people killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads in 2012 involved a young driver.
- Nearly a quarter of all car drivers (133 out of 542 drivers) who died in 2012 were young drivers themselves.
- Young car drivers account for an estimated 3 to 5 per cent of all car miles driven each year. Therefore the rate they are involved in accidents is considerably higher than would be expected given the distance they drive.

The situation is not working for young drivers either. Insurance premiums for young drivers have increased dramatically due to the high levels of catastrophic claims (claims costing over £500,000) involving inexperienced drivers. As a result the GB has seen an 18% reduction in the number of young people taking a practical driving test since 2007, which has had implications for their education and employment opportunities. The insurance industry has indicated that Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) would enable it to reduce premiums for young drivers. The Graduated Driver Licensing Bill provides an historic opportunity to put young drivers back on the roads safely.

Recent research by TRL, commissioned by the Department for Transport, has confirmed the two key factors behind the increasing levels of accidents as 'youth and inexperience' and it is this absence of experience in dangerous situations which has led to 17-19 year olds having the highest number of deaths per 10 million drivers.

Despite the fact that 50% of young drivers fail their first driving test, the highest proportion of accidents for newly qualified drivers occurring 1-6 months after their exam. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has expressed support of the introduction of a GDL stating that such a scheme would ensure future drivers 'are better equipped to drive safely on the roads'.

Benefits of the GDL

- [TRL report PPR673](#) found that a full graduated driver licensing scheme for 17-19 year old drivers in GB only could reduce the number of casualties by 4,471, the number of deaths by 230 and costs by £224 million.
- The GDL has proven effective in reducing collisions and casualties in the countries in which it has been implemented, such as New Zealand, Australia and Canada.
- Public Support has proven positive for the move towards a GDL.
- Numerous insurers (through the ABI) have supported the idea of GDL, claiming that it would allow for more affordable insurance premiums with possible reductions of 10-15%.
- The introduction of GDL increases the empowerment of parents over their children learning to drive.
- Graduated learning and licensing already exist in many other fields, such as motorcycling.

The effects of a GDL scheme will be dependent upon the strength of the scheme's components, the conviction of the authorities implementing the systems and the involvement of the communities, including young drivers and also their parents.

Where is the Green Paper on Young Driver Safety?

The Government has already acknowledged the need to improve the safety of young drivers and has [committed to publishing](#) a Green Paper on Young Driver Safety. However, Ministers have repeatedly put back the date of publication, from "Spring" to "Summer" to "by the end of this year". PACTS has welcomed this planned consultation and called on the Government to publish without delay and to include a thorough examination of the case for GDL.

Conclusions

- The current safety problem regarding young drivers is an issue which needs to be addressed instead of just allowing for the reduction of young drivers on the roads as has been happening.
- The Government should publish its Green Paper on young driver safety without delay. This should include measures which go beyond the scope of this bill.
- Improved training, testing and wider use of telematics (black boxes) could supplement GDL but are not adequate alternatives.
- Consultation with young people, their parents and wider society is a necessity when developing the GDL as it allows community involvement instead of creating a sense of imposition.
- If imposed the GDL scheme must be well-structured around specific restrictions and regulations in order to prove successful.
- The introduction of the GDL would provide casualty reductions within the UK, allowing for young drivers to obtain their initial experience of driving in lower risk scenarios, which would benefit younger drivers, their passengers and all other drivers within GB.

PACTS previously produced a policy paper (circulated to Members in April) analysing the case for GDL: [Getting young drivers back on the road - in safety](#)

PACTS would be delighted to assist Members with further information about GDL.

David G Davies, Executive Director, PACTS, david.davies@pacts.org.uk 0207 222 7732