

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA



26<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Prime Minister

On Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January it will be 40 years since the seat belt legislation (front seats) came into effect in Great Britain. Seat belts have been one of the most effective road safety measures of all time. The legislation was introduced by the founders of PACTS, particularly Barry Sheerman MP. Sir Peter Bottomley MP, also a long-term supporter of PACTS, soon followed on as road safety minister. PACTS is proud to be supported by these two most senior members of the House of Commons.

Over the past few years PACTS has drawn attention to the fact that, although seat belt wearing levels are high, each year hundreds of vehicle occupants in Britain die in collisions while not wearing one. In 2021 this reached 30% of people dying in cars, a new high.

PACTS has called for a package of measures to increase seat belt wearing rates. These are low cost and relatively simple to implement. One of the key measures is to award at least three penalty points for failing to wear a seat belt. The current fine of £100 with no penalty points does not convey the seriousness of the safety risk. (The maximum £500 fine applies only if the case goes to court, which is unusual.) The seat belt penalty is completely out of step with the other “fatal four” offences on which the police focus. For example, using a mobile phone while driving now attracts a £200 fine and six penalty points, speeding incurs at least three points and drink or drug driving can lead to loss of licence and even a jail sentence.

We are not seeking punitive measures. The purpose is to show that this is a serious safety matter. For many drivers a £100 fine would not be particularly significant whereas points on their licence would be of more concern to them.

National Highways and some local authorities have recently employed a new generation of safety cameras. Using AI these can accurately detect drivers using a hand-held mobile phone or not wearing a seat belt. The level of offences detected is alarming. However, without the threat of penalty points, the police enforcement action will have less impact.

We recognise that people fail to wear a seat belt sometimes through forgetfulness, sometimes because they do not understand the safety importance, and sometimes deliberately avoiding it. We welcome your recent statement that everybody should wear a seat belt. We therefore urge you to support our call for action on seat belts, particularly the introduction of at least three penalty points. We attach our [briefing](#) which sets out the case in more detail.

**PACTS**  
Buckingham Court  
78 Buckingham Gate  
Westminster  
London SW1E 6PE  
  
t 020 7222 7732  
e [admin@pacts.org.uk](mailto:admin@pacts.org.uk)  
w [www.pacts.org.uk](http://www.pacts.org.uk)  
twitter @PACTS

Reducing NHS waiting times was one of your recent five priorities. More use of seat belts will help keep people out of A&E and long-term NHS care. It will save lives and reduce injuries.

We urge you to support this measure.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David G Davies', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David G Davies,  
Executive Director, PACTS  
[david.davies@pacts.org.uk](mailto:david.davies@pacts.org.uk)

cc Mark Harper, Secretary of State for Transport  
Sir Peter Bottomley MP  
Barry Sheerman MP