



Department for Transport

Andrew Haigh
HM Senior Coroner
Coroner's Office
No 1 Staffordshire Place
Stafford
ST16 2LP

sscor@staffordshire.gov.uk

██████████
Deputy Director
Road User Licensing, Insurance & Safety
Department for Transport
Zone 3/29
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Web Site: www.dft.gov.uk
Our ref: RULIS RR

7 August 2018

Andrew Haigh
HM Senior Coroner

Thank you for your letter of 21 June 2018 regarding the Regulation 28 Report in relation to the death of Jacob Elliot Brown and the suggestion that it should be compulsory for all young drivers to have black boxes (telematics) fitted in any vehicles they drive to prevent future deaths.

I was sorry to hear of the tragic death of Jacob, and I send my sincere condolences to his family and friends.

The Government is committed to improving the safety of all road users, especially young drivers who are at a greater risk of being involved in a collision. We believe that improved training, education, technology and engagement with young drivers, and their social support networks, could better equip these young people with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to be safe drivers.

As you are aware, there is currently no legal requirement for telematics to be used by young drivers. The decision to take up telematics is made in the context of motor insurance – a driver may accept telematics in order to reduce his or her premiums – and so the decision rests with the policy holder.

We do not propose to take any action at this time to make telematics compulsory, as we do not have sufficient data to demonstrate that it would be effective. To understand how telematics in a non-insurance context could reduce young driver collision risk, it needs to be tested and evaluated. As such we are investigating its use as part of our £2 million research programme called 'Driver 2020'.

In Driver 2020, which commenced in April 2017, five interventions are about to be trialled with over 14,000 learner and novice drivers aged between 17 and 24 years old. The aim of the study is to provide thorough evidence as to whether any of the five interventions produce clear road safety benefits and reduce collision risk. Once the research is completed at the end of 2020, we will consider the way forward. The specific interventions being considered are:

- 1) Using telematics devices and a mobile app to guide and provide feedback to new drivers during their first 12 months of driving post-test. For example, highlighting data on speeding, smoothness (cornering, braking and acceleration) and exposure to risk (frequency of and length of journeys).
- 2) Hazard perception training, designed to increase skills in drivers as they approach (and potentially just after they begin) solo driving.
- 3) A training log-book – to increase the amount and type of on-road practice that learner drivers obtain before taking their practical driving test.
- 4) A 'mentor agreement' – which involves the setting of voluntary limits, agreed between the young driver and a parent/guardian, designed to reduce exposure to risky driving situations during the first months of solo driving.

- 5) An interactive educational intervention, to teach learner drivers about risk factors involved in independent driving, delivered over the course of a day in a classroom setting.

Better hazard perception skills are crucial to improving road safety and we have used our 'Innovation Challenge Fund' to investigate how new technology, including virtual reality, can help learner drivers hone their hazard perception skills before taking their tests.

You may be aware that the Prime Minister asked the Department for Transport to look into the benefits of Graduated Driver Licencing (GDL) following a question in the House of Commons. GDL is a staged approach to fully independent driving which builds the skills and experience of young and novice drivers in structured steps; or places restrictions on their driving post-test, for example, restricting who they carry or preventing driving at night.

Evidence from countries including New Zealand suggests that GDL can have a beneficial effect on road safety. However, we want to be sure that the benefits are balanced against the costs of the restrictions, as many young drivers (especially in rural areas) use their cars to get to work or college.

Northern Ireland have just consulted on implementing GDL with a scheme that includes a minimum learning period of six months and restrictions on who else may travel in the car. We are therefore using the introduction of GDL in Northern Ireland as a pilot for gathering evidence on its potential introduction in Great Britain.

Another approach is encouraging learners to practise in a wider range of conditions and environments. New legislation which came into force in June has allowed them drive on motorways when accompanied by an Approved Driving Instructor in a dual control car.

We have taken a tough stance on drivers who use a handheld mobile phone while driving. In March last year the fixed penalty increased to six penalty points and a £200 fine. Drivers who passed their test within the last two years already have a lower disqualification threshold of six points on their licence (compared to the usual 12 points for other

drivers), which means that if they are caught using their mobile phone while driving they now face having their licence revoked.

Our award winning THINK! Campaign advertisements now primarily target 17-24 year old male drivers, for example, the [2017?] Christmas campaign was aimed at young men stopping their friends from drinking and driving. We are now also using social media channels to get these messages across.

Finally, you may also be interested to know that on 13 June the Road Safety Minister, Jesse Norman MP, laid a Written Ministerial Statement before Parliament announcing his four priority road user groups that are to be addressed in a forthcoming two year road safety action plan. One of the groups is to be addressed is **Young Road Users**, which will include Young Drivers.

The Written Ministerial Statement was accompanied by a progress report on the 2015 British Road Safety Statement which can be viewed online at:


https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719259/road-safety-statement-progress-report.pdf.

The original Road Safety Statement can also be viewed online at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-statement-working-together-to-build-a-safer-road-system.

The outcome of the Driver 2020 trials will be made publicly available once they are completed.

Yours sincerely



Pauline Reeves