



## Department for Transport

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*Dear Mr Chapman*

Thank you for your letter of 26 September to [REDACTED] regarding the Regulation 28 Report in relation to the deaths of Caitlin Lydia Huddleston and Skye Olivia Mitchell. I am replying as the Minister responsible for road safety.

I am very sorry to hear of the tragic deaths of Ms Huddleston and Ms Mitchell and send my sincere condolences to their families and friends. I also send my best wishes to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in their continuing recovery.

The Government is committed to improving safety for all road users, especially young drivers, who are at a greater risk of being involved in a collision and I have noted your recommendation that a form of Graduated Driving Licensing (GDL) should be considered. The Prime Minister has also asked the Department to look into the benefits of GDL following a question in the House of Commons.

There is evidence from countries in which GDL has been implemented to suggest that it can have a beneficial effect on road safety. There are a number of approaches to GDL; these include increasing the skills and experience of young and novice drivers in structured steps, and placing restrictions post-test as you mention in your report, for example by restricting who they can carry in the vehicle or preventing night-time driving.

However, the Department needs to be sure that the benefits of introducing GDL to the UK are balanced against the potential risks and costs of the restrictions on the young drivers themselves, as many (especially in rural areas) use their cars to get to work or college.

For this reason, the Department has decided to use the introduction of GDL in Northern Ireland as a pilot, to gather evidence on the potential for GDL in Great Britain. The Northern Irish Government has consulted on secondary legislation to bring a number of provisions into force, including passenger carrying restrictions and a six month mandatory minimum learning period.

Officials from both the Department and Northern Ireland are currently discussing how to take this work forward.

In April 2017, the Department commissioned a £2 million research programme to explore the effectiveness of five technological and educational measures to improve the safety of young and novice drivers, both before they take their test and after they have passed. The aim of the study is to provide thorough evidence as to whether any of the interventions produce clear road safety benefits and reduce collision risk. The measures being tested 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, by 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 or 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.

The Department is also currently taking forward a number of road safety measures in accordance with its publically stated road safety priorities, through the Road Safety Statement. Recent changes include allowing learner

drivers on motorways when accompanied by an Approved Driving Instructor in a dual control car and increasing the penalty for using a handheld mobile phone while driving to six penalty points and a £200 fine.

In June, I issued a written statement to Parliament announcing 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.

Full details of the June announcement can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/road-safety-recent-progress-and-future-work>

A copy of your Regulation 28 report for this case is with policy officials in the Department looking into options for GDL, and your recommendations will be considered as part of their continuing work in this area. Thank you again for sending them to the Department.



