



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Linda Karen Hadfield Lee
Acting Area Coroner for Coventry and
Warwickshire
Coroner's Office
Warwickshire Justice Centre
Newbold Terrace
Leamington Spa
CV32 4EL

17 February 2026

Dear Linda Karen Hadfield Lee,

RESPONSE TO REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS

Thank you for your letter of 18 December 2025, enclosing your Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths dated 8 December 2025 made under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, following the inquest you conducted into the deaths of Harry Josph Purcell and Matilda 'Tilly' Grace Seccombe.

I am deeply saddened by the circumstances of the deaths of Harry Purcell, Tilly Seccombe, and Frank Wormald, and I would like to extend my sincere condolences to their families.

I am responding on behalf of two of the addressees of your report, the Department for Transport and its executive agency the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency ("DVSA").

Improving road safety is one of my Department's highest priorities. Too many people are killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions, and this Government will work hard to prevent these tragedies for all road users.

The latest statistics do show that the number of car fatalities involving 17 to 24-year-olds on Britain's roads is falling – from 448 in 1990 to 73 in 2024. This is an 84% total decrease. However, this Government acknowledges that there is still work to be done. In terms of population and the number of miles driven, 17– 24-year-olds, particularly young men, remain one of the highest fatality risk groups both as car drivers and passengers.

That is one reason why, on 7 January 2026 my Department published a new Road Safety Strategy, setting out the Government's vision for a safer future on our roads for all. The Strategy sets an ambitious target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on British roads by 65% by 2035. This target will focus the efforts of road safety partners across Britain, with measures to improve road design, protect vulnerable road users, and review motoring offences. All of this will be supported and monitored by a new Road Safety Board which I will chair.

Whilst we are not considering further restrictions on newly qualified drivers such as carrying passengers or driving at night, we are consulting on a Minimum Learning Period in England, Scotland, and Wales before learner drivers can take their practical driving test.

As part of our consultation into a Minimum Learning Period, we are asking about including a mandatory modular syllabus as part of the new mandatory learner requirements. Learner drivers are already encouraged to gain experience in a range of driving conditions as part of their learning journey. This includes practice during nighttime, on rural and urban roads, in poor weather and on higher-speed roads. Exposure to varied scenarios helps learners develop competence, adaptability and preparedness for real-world driving. A modular learning syllabus could formalise this approach by requiring structured experience across diverse conditions.

We know from research carried out in other countries that introducing a "Minimum Learning Period" has potential to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries.

This is why we are consulting on the introduction of pre-test measures and combining these with the post-test measures already in place through the Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995. That Act has a form of "probationary period" of 2 years for novice drivers of all ages in Great Britain. During this time, instead of the standard 12 points, if 6 or more points are received, including in the learning period, a driver's licence is revoked and they must apply again for a provisional licence, re-entering the learning stage.

Additionally, as part of the motoring offences consultation, we are consulting on a lower blood alcohol limit for novice drivers in England and Wales.

Turning to the concerns raised regarding the scope of the current driving test: the object of the driving test is to ensure that the candidate is well grounded in the basic principles of safe driving and is sufficiently practised in them to be able to show, at the time of the test, that they are a competent and considerate driver and are not a source of danger to themselves or to other road users. If a candidate reaches the required standard they will pass their test. However, it is not intended to, and could not, replicate every scenario a driver may encounter after qualification.

The driving test has been continually reviewed and has undergone many changes over the years, which includes adding the sat nav for the independent driving. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose for today's roads and meets current legislative and road safety requirements. The test remains under constant review.

Following a successful five-month trial, the DVSA introduced updates to the car practical driving test from Monday 24 November 2025. As a result of these changes, learner drivers will spend more time on higher-speed roads during their driving test, where location allows. These changes aim to enhance road safety, address collision rates in rural areas and align the test more closely with real-world driving conditions.

Reviewing and refreshing all current routes will take time. The expectation is that by 31 March 2026, each Driving Test Centre will have reviewed and updated all routes to be more relevant and to include high speed, high risk rural roads where location allows.

Vehicle loading and passenger dynamics are important aspects of safe driving, but these situations vary significantly depending on vehicle type and usage. For this reason, the test focuses on core competencies such as hazard perception, vehicle control, and decision-making, which are fundamental to adapting safely to different conditions. Learner drivers have the option to carry passengers during their learning journeys.

The theory test includes questions on vehicle handling and loading to help learner drivers understand the key road safety considerations involved.

DVSA promotes 'Pass Plus', which is a practical training course that takes at least 6 hours and is for drivers to improve their skills and drive more safely. It can be taken at any time although it should be most useful to new drivers in the year after passing their test.

Pass Plus training takes at least 6 hours. It has 6 modules, covering driving:

- in town
- in all weathers
- on rural roads
- at night
- on dual carriageways
- on motorways

<https://www.gov.uk/pass-plus>

Some motor insurance companies offer discounts for drivers who complete the 'Pass Plus' scheme.

DVSA produces a number of guidance documents to assist drivers, including the 'Highway Code', 'The Official DVSA Guides to Driving – the essential skills' and 'The Official DVSA Guide to Riding – the essential skills'. Further information on these guidance documents can be viewed via the following links -

www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code

[The Official DVSA Guide to Driving - the essential skills](#)

[The Official DVSA Guide to Riding - the essential skills](#)

DVSA advises learner drivers and Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) to ensure that candidates for a driving test are sufficiently prepared and ready to drive independently and sit a driving test.

The Ready to Pass campaign was launched in July 2022. The campaign targets learners, their parents, and driving instructors in Great Britain. It aims to improve learners' understanding of what it means to be test ready and how they can assess their readiness. The campaign also advises to delay a test if an individual is not ready.

<https://readytopass.campaign.gov.uk/>

DVSA encourages the ADI industry to take lessons in different weather conditions and on rural and urban roads as well as motorways. In addition, the DVSA encourages ADIs to provide learner drivers with a mock driving test, that takes place on a variety of roads, including rural roads with higher speed limits and dual carriageways with the national speed limit.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/carry-out-mock-driving-tests-for-your-pupils>

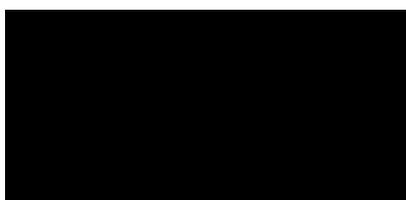
I want to reiterate that this Government treats road safety seriously, and we are committed to reducing the numbers of those killed and injured on our roads.

The consultation on introducing a Minimum Learning Period for learner drivers closes on 11 May and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introducing-a-minimum-learning-period-for-learner-drivers/introducing-a-minimum-learning-period-for-learner-drivers-category-b-driving-licence>

Once this and other road safety consultations have concluded, we will publish our responses in due course.

Best wishes,



MINISTER FOR LOCAL TRANSPORT