

# Network

OCTOBER 2013

views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG UK) or the Editor

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## EDITORIAL

**Firstly, a big apology** - the last article in this edition concerns a report by the House of Commons – Commons Select Committee on The New European motorcycle test: Govt Response to the Committee’s Sixth Report of Session 2009-10. Its lengthy and full of Government jargon, whilst I wouldn’t normally take up such valuable space on the whole thing, the report does contain recommendations which any of you, as interested parties, may wish to talk over with your Group members. If you’re not one of those interested parties I’d stop reading at the end of the previous article if I were you.

Having said that, this previous article – a Speech by Norman Baker on the new framework for traffic signs! This discusses the importance of the traffic signs policy review, as well as sign lighting and speed limits and could be yet another riveting subject, guaranteed to cure insomnia. Don’t shoot the messenger but it just might be something you’re asked about!

During the past few weeks since the sentencing of various individuals over the deaths of bikers, I've been debating with myself – 'is the law at ass?' 20months – 2 years for a life! In my humble, very personal opinion, the law most definitely needs an extreme overhaul when it comes to appropriate sentencing.

Once again, a big 'thank you' to George Legg for doing the 'footwork' for this edition while I continue to take things a bit easier and lots of physio following my stroke in early August – 9 weeks on I'm told "I ain't doing bad".

See you in November, Ride free, A.

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| Acknowledgments: George Legg, Phil McFadden, Rowan Publications and anyone else I've forgotten |
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## MAG PRESS RELEASES

11 – 09 – 13. **MAG is disappointed that the Attorney General** has decided not to revisit the lenient sentencing of a motorist whose actions led to the death of a motorcyclist.

Newspaper reports state that Mark Walsh, 43, slammed on his brakes near a slip-road, causing 41-year-old Peter Sarchet behind him to lose control of his bike after the front wheel locked when he had to brake hard.

Walsh received a sentence of just 20 months for an action that would appear to have been deliberately malicious.

MAG considers that where the courts make a decision that is clearly likely to arouse concerns about disproportionate treatment, a degree of responsibility to explain that decision is necessary to sustain confidence in the justice system.

MAG suspects that motorcyclists are treated less sympathetically by the courts and for the attorney general to uphold a suspiciously lenient sentence without any explanation, represents contempt for public sensibilities.

MAG has written to the attorney general again to pursue this point

## Two year sentence for causing death by careless driving

The Motorcycle Action Group is pleased that Brian Hampton has been brought to Justice over causing the death of 16 year old Jade Clark, while driving his Volvo XC90 in February this year. However, they feel the sentence handed down by Judge Samuel Wiggs, is woefully inadequate.

Hampton received a two year sentence for causing death by careless driving. An additional four year sentence was imposed for Perverting the Course of Justice. The sentences will run consecutively.

Hampton, who was an ex-paramedic, was driving while disqualified for drink driving. He denies knowledge of the accident, yet drove around Jade and fled the scene, leaving her laying in the middle of a busy road. He later attempted to cover his tracks by having his car repaired. He lied to both his wife, and the garage where the car was repaired, as to the circumstances behind the damage.

MAG applauds the work of the police in bringing Hampton to Justice, considering the large amount of resources used. They inspected around 1,400 Volvo XC90's before identifying the driver. They described Jade as quite an experienced rider, despite her age.

MAG understands that the Judge followed the sentencing guidelines laid down by the Government. John Mitchell, MAG's National Chairman, has written to the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Attorney General to ask them to review the prosecution of the case, and Brian Hampton's sentence. Also to review sentencing guidelines, which seem to be at the heart of the problem. He has also asked his MP to table a question in parliament on the apparent lack of value given to the life of a vulnerable road user.

John said: "Brian Hampton should not have been on that road that particular day. He was already disqualified. His actions in attempting to cover up the incident are cowardly in the extreme. In this situation we cannot just blame Hampton, the law needs to be clearer on appropriate sentencing. If a banned driver receives only a two year sentence for causing the death of a vulnerable road user, what sort of value does that put on a human life?"

## **Motorcyclists meet over A40 concerns**

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) held a meeting on Sunday the 15th September in Llandovery after concerns were raised by locals about accident statistics along the A40 between Brecon and Llandeilo. There were no invitations other than via social networking and word of mouth, but the Owl's Nest Diner provided a welcome meeting point for members of South, Mid and West Wales MAG groups along with several groups of local riders, including representatives from the Institute of Advanced Motorists and The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. A public consultation on this matter had previously been held in Sennybridge.

There was lively discussion about several recorded offences of dangerous driving, and high speed riding, particularly in the village of Sennybridge. The main point raised was that while a minority are deliberately flouting the highway code, repercussions could affect everyone. Those at the meeting were in agreement that the request for reducing speed limits along the A40 would have no effect on the lawbreaking individuals, but would actually make life more difficult for local residents, and would highly likely reduce tourism in the area.

Retired Police Sergeant Aneurin Max Jones -who is now also a MAG member: "I am very concerned about unrealistic speed limits that both locals and visitors see no reason to obey. It can devalue necessary speed limits and lead to a pattern of behaviour that results in non-compliance with all speed limits, causing danger to all. It matters not whether the speed limit is 60, 50, or 40mph, the 'problem individual' will still be a problem and others, driving at perfectly safe speeds, will be unjustly affected, even fined, for doing no more than was previously a lawful speed. "

Thoughts are being sought and collected as to ways this issue can be addressed without draconian measures.

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Said local MAG Member Alex Thompson "I drive a car as well, and I know how when even an older bike accelerates past me it seems as if it must be doing a hundred miles an hour -in reality, it's that the power to weight ratio of two wheels means a bike can rapidly speed up as it passes, while still keeping to the speed limit. Yes it's great fun, but the manoeuvrability and flexibility also means I can get to where I'm going in a half to two thirds the time a car takes, causing less damage to the environment and the road itself."

Midwife Sam Lloyd-Jones agreed "When I arrive people see the bike, look at me in my leathers and it's obvious they think I'm a hooligan. Then I remove my helmet and it's funny to see their faces change -"you're the one who caught my baby!"

Gareth Budding, from Pembrey, said "People should think more of others -at least stick to the speed limits in the towns and villages! I always try to imagine what it's like for the people who live there."

Asked to describe the group's aims, Rob Lewis said "We are concerned to address the causes of accidents and would look forward to working alongside other groups to achieve this. To target all motorcyclists as dangerous idiots only serves to cloud the issue and divide responsible motorists"

A further consultation was called for, and invitations to another meeting will be sent to any interested parties.

For further information contact South Wales MAG Regional Rep Phil McFadden 0844 248 0177, email [south-wales-region-rep@mag-uk.org](mailto:south-wales-region-rep@mag-uk.org)

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## AROUND GB

### **Peterborough MAG Secures Motorcycle Parking in the City**

With the new development of Cowgate came the news that the secure motorcycle parking in Kings Street would be closed & not reinstated. Peterborough Motorcycle Action Group stepped into action and began a series of meetings with Peterborough City Council to ensure that replacement motorcycle parking was positioned as close to King Street as possible. The free off road parking in Priestgate is just one of the sites in the City where riders can secure their machines with quick and easy access to the city centre. We are pleased to have worked alongside Peterborough City Council in these last few months, with more off road, free, secure parking coming in the future encouraging powered 2 wheelers into the city thus keeping congestion down. There are still some finishing touches to go in such as dedicated CCTV for the M/C parking area, signage on approach roads and the possibility of a refreshment stall close to the parking area, though the parking area is open to riders now! MAG can, and does make a difference. Dave & Tink (Attending the press shoot today 26/06/2013: Dave & Tink, Peterborough MAG Joint Reps, Head of Planning, Simon Machen, and Delivery Team Manager, Stuart Mounfield, from Peterborough City Council ).

### **Welsh Government (9 Sep) - Trac Môn races ahead**

New facilities at Trac Môn racing circuit mark the latest in a series of improvements at the track making it a world class facility, First Minister said today (Monday, 9 September).

The First Minister officially opened a new control centre and pit complex which has been backed by the Welsh Government's Tourism Grant. The control centre offers race organisers a race administration centre, steward's office and space for commentators and media. The pit complex includes 22 garages with the capacity to take at least 44 cars or 80 motorcycles.

The First Minister said, "This project is already transforming the business here, attracting new, prestigious clients and expanding the range of activities beyond the weekend boosting employment and income to the area. It is good news to hear that new clients include leading Formula 3 and GT teams, as well as major car manufacturers, for both product testing and launch purposes.

"Investment and growth at Trac Môn have helped raise the standards of the facilities here to international level, which will be a boost to the area."

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## **Norway: Ban on cable barriers upheld**

In 2006 the then transport minister introduced a ban on cable barriers in Norway. The ban was introduced with regards to the safety of motorcyclists.

Forces in the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, however, wanted the ban to be repealed and therefore sent the case on a wide consultation, with a deadline in May last year. NMCU filed a comprehensive response to the hearing and argued strongly that the ban should be maintained. NMCU's main arguments was that cable barriers are more dangerous for motorcyclists than other types of barriers, that there are adequate alternatives to cable barriers and that the reintroduction of cable barriers would not provide any documented gains - neither economic, practical or traffic safety.

In a press release issued 27<sup>th</sup> September the Ministry of Transport says the request from Norwegian Public Roads Administration has been considered and that the Ministry has decided to uphold the ban. The grounds for this decision are motorcyclists' sense of insecurity for this type of barrier, the high maintenance costs and the fact that there are equal alternatives, even for use on narrow roads.

In addition, the Ministry mentions that the political agreement that was the basis for the ban in 2006 continued when Parliament considered the National Transport 2014-2023. In this process several different party constellations in Transportation Committee had tabled comments supporting the ban on cable barriers.

NMCU is pleased with Ministry's wise decision and suggests that this matter is now parked for good. There are several barrier solutions on the market that satisfy all road users' safety needs, that do not cost more when all costs are included in the calculation, and which in addition is both practical and has a nice design.

NMCU's media contact, Hans Petter Strifeld, says: Cable barriers are history, let's instead work together and find the best and most cost effective solutions among the barrier alternatives on the market.

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## **House of Commons**

### **Drug Driving (Assessment of Drug Misuse) Bill 6 Sep**

The Drug Driving (Assessment of Drug Misuse) Bill has been published on the Parliament website. To access click here: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2013-2014/0020/14020.pdf>

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## **DVLA**

### **Motorists warned about posting images of driving licences on social media websites (6 Sep)**

Motorists are warned that posting images of your driving licence on social media websites can put you at a high risk of identity fraud.

**DVLA** has been made aware of instances where fraudsters have been using pictures of genuine driving licenses that have been posted on social media websites, as part of an advert selling fake driving licenses.

By posting these pictures online, motorists are providing the fraudsters with enough personal information to commit identity fraud. This could allow them to open bank accounts, obtain loans, credit cards and goods in your name and could affect your personal finances until the matter is resolved.

The main culprits of this are young, excited drivers that have just received their full driving licenses but all motorists need to ensure that they do not post any personal details on social media websites to prevent compromising their identity.

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### **Institute of Advanced Motorists: Stronger penalties needed for texting drivers**

Drivers convicted of causing death by dangerous driving should be given stronger and more consistent penalties, according to road safety charity the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists).

An IAM analysis of eleven recent prosecutions involving mobile and smartphone use revealed that the average sentence for causing death by dangerous driving is four-and-a-half years in prison and a disqualification from driving for seven years. In all of the cases analysed, the convicted drivers were found to have lost their concentration due to using their mobile phone.

Loss of concentration caused:

- Six incidents where vehicles ran into the back of a stationary or slow moving queue of traffic or a broken down vehicle
- Three incidents where vehicles drifted across the road and hit another vehicle head-on
- Two incidents leading to the death of a pedestrian
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The vast majority of the public agree that that using a mobile phone while driving is clearly unsafe. Yet, since 2006, 750,000 fixed penalties have been issued to drivers for this very reason.<sup>1</sup>

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: "The maximum sentence available to the courts is fourteen years, so there is still scope for an even stronger road safety message that drivers who kill whilst distracted on their phones will be caught and jailed for a long time.

"The lesson here is obvious: never use your phone while driving. Whether you have a hands free kit or use loudspeaker, it doesn't matter. Using your phone in any capacity reduces your attention from the task at hand - driving."

90 per cent of respondents disagreed that it was perfectly safe to talk on a handheld phone while driving according to British Social Attitudes survey 2011: Public Attitudes towards Transport:.

IAM analysis of penalties for causing death by dangerous driving due to using a mobile phone covers the time period 2006-2011.

The IAM is the UK's largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to improving standards and safety in driving, motorcycling and cycling. The commercial division of the IAM operates through its occupational driver training company IAM Drive & Survive. The IAM has more than 200 local volunteer groups and over 100,000 members in the UK and Ireland. It is best known for the advanced driving test and the advanced driving, motorcycling and cycling courses. Its policy and research division offers advice and expertise on road safety.

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### **Road Safety News: International Handbook of Road Safety 2 Sep**

Leading academics and practitioners in road safety, public health and international road safety advocacy are collaborating to provide an 'International Handbook of Road Safety' to support the implementation of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety.

According to the World Health Organization, about 1.24 million people die each year on the world's roads with people aged between 15 and 44 accounting for 59% global traffic deaths. In addition, between 20 and

50 million people suffer non-fatal injuries from traffic accidents. Although, countries have made significant efforts to reduce the number of road deaths it continues to be an important public health issue.

The Handbook, coordinated by Monash University, the Commission for Global Road Safety and the University of Michigan, is a 28 chapter book that will bring leading road safety, public health and regulatory scholars, along with leading figures from non-governmental organisations and industries, into a single volume. Contributors have decades of experience between them in fighting the global epidemic of road traffic injuries, and represent leading organisations in Europe, the US, Australia, Africa and Asia. This book is intended to place road safety in its historical, social and ethical context, and will articulate a roadmap for what needs to be done in order to stem the growing number of deaths on our roads. It will serve as an important reference point for the Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety which is due to be held in 2015, at the mid-point of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, and will highlight the importance of including road traffic injury prevention within the post-2015 development agenda, as an issue impacting on wider goals for health, poverty reduction, reducing carbon emissions and promoting social justice. The book is expected to be released in May 2014 to coincide with the third anniversary of the launch of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, and is being published by Edward Elgar London.

Two symposia were organised, one in Melbourne on the 6th May to coincide with UN Global Road Safety Week and a second at the FIA Foundation office in London (11-12 June) to bring authors together for wide-ranging discussions and to serve as an informal peer review. The International Handbook of Road Safety is a collaboration between Michael Fitzharris of Monash University's Accident Research Centre, Saul Billingsley, of the FIA Foundation and Commission for Global Road Safety, and Diana Bowman of the University of Michigan Risk Science Center and the School of Public Health.

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## F E M A

### **Protest against technical control in Brussels on 14th September.**

The FBMC, Fédération Belge des Motards en Colère, will organise a protest on 14th of September in Brussels, which will start from different points in Belgium and culminate in the capital of Europe with the objective to show their opposition against periodical technical control (PTI).

The FBMC is not a member of FEMA but share its opposition to the Parliament plan to make PTI compulsory across Europe by 2016, even though no independent study could prove its positive impact on road safety, from the countries that already have one in place. The European Commission have estimated that if PTIs were enforced in every country it would cost the riding community at least 1.2 billion Euros per year or 50 Euros per person. After a very close vote, the European Parliament went against the recommendation of its own Commission (to postpone the inclusion of two-wheelers long enough to independently prove the legitimacy of this project) and the Consilium hasn't voted yet. The various riders' organization stay mobilized, and the FBMC is calling every rider to join their action.

A spokesperson from the FBMC said that it will be a civil and positive action, during which they hope to meet some key politicians and make a show of the determination of all riders outside the Berlaymont building in Schuman. They also call other riders organisations to add their voice at the event.

Please find all the information in <http://www.fbmc-belgium.be/>

**And**

### **(20 Sep) European Mobility Week: "In Town without My Car!" What about my motorbike?**

European Mobility Week is an annual event to promote sustainable mobility, a campaign organised with the support of the Directorates-General for the Environment and Transport of the European Commission. The campaign, which runs from 16 to 22 September this year, claims to "encourage European local authorities to introduce and promote sustainable transport measures and to invite their citizens to try out alternatives to [conventionally-fueled] car use".

All alternatives have been covered this year, from electric cars and car-pooling to wheeled chairs, but not motorcycles even though they are used by dozens of millions of European citizens every day to beat congestion.

**Sustainable2Wheels** event, organized by ETRA with the support of The Greens/EFA was held on September 18th on the Esplanade of the European Parliament as part of the EU Mobility Week. *Sustainable2Wheels* invited the PTW sector to present their mobility solutions to congestion and limited road space, including new generation of electric and alternative-powered two-wheelers, some of which are already in use.

During the second debate of the day between European decision-makers (Jose Fernandez Garcia, Brian Simpson, Michael Cramer and Keith Taylor) and *the two-wheeler* sector on the European Urban Mobility Policy, main arguments revolved around infrastructure plans. Many cyclists representatives strongly opposed cars mobility, and expressed the need to change the system approach.

According to Jose Fernandez Garcia, Policy Officer of Clean Transport & Sustainable Urban Mobility – DG MOVE – the solution lays in "Improving the structure to improve safety for bike". The Motorcycling sector would have agreed with such conclusion, provided it was consulted... . The PTW community has a lot of actual and practical solutions to offer to address the many mobility issues of modern cities, so why is it not consulted?

All in all, the European Mobility Week hasn't evolved much in its approach to "mobility" over the last few years, disregarding as always citizens' real needs and all *existing* alternatives. Fortunately initiatives like Sustainable2Wheels brings some lights over the PTW sector, committed to provide sustainable and affordable mobility solutions to everyday needs. Hopefully discussions on the coming Urban Mobility Package will be more balanced and integrate all stakeholders.

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### **(9 Sep)**

#### **MCI Insurance - Paralysed biker gets £1.4m payout.**

In 2008 Darren Russell from Disley in Cheshire was out riding his Kawasaki when he was hit by a lorry turning from a side road near Stockport. He suffered terrible injuries in the crash including a broken neck which left him paralysed. He requires permanent help to breath with a specially fitted device and is wheelchair bound because of the incident.

The case supported by MCE Insurance has been on-going since 2010 with three separate accident reconstruction experts investigating the incident.

The case went to a High Court trial in Liverpool to determine liability to which the judge found the driver of the lorry to be responsible for the incident.

MCE's chief group executive, Julian Edward,s commented: "This case highlights the devastating repercussions that careless driving can have on someone's life."

Mr Russell's team at MCE Insurance confirmed that a package had been negotiated on Mr Russell's behalf at an out-of-court settlement meeting. The package includes full compensation to cover his rehabilitation and care needs. He will receive a lump sum of £4.1m as well as £240,000 a year to cover care costs.

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### **(11 Sep) House of Commons Transport Committee.**

#### **Transport committee to publish government response to new European motorcycle test report**

Special Report: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2009-10: The new European motorcycle test.

The Transport Select Committee has agreed to publish its Seventh Special Report of Session 2013-14, The new European motorcycle test: Government response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2009-10, (HC 656) on Friday 13 September at 11.00am.

The Report will be available on The Stationery Office (TSO) Ltd's and the Committee's website shortly after the publication hour has passed: Transport Committee Publications.

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**Dept for Transport (18 Sep)**

**Speech by Norman Baker on the new framework for traffic signs  
Discusses the importance of the traffic signs policy review as well as sign lighting and speed limits.**

These are the speaker's notes, not a transcript of the speech as it was delivered.  
Good morning.

I am delighted to be here today (18 September 2013) to say a few words on progress we are making on the traffic signs policy review.

Traffic signs play an integral role in all traffic management schemes - from the smallest of road works, to opening the hard shoulder to flowing traffic to maximise capacity as part of the managed motorways scheme. By ensuring that our traffic signing system remains up to date, we are helping to make best use of our road network, important for our economy.

This annual event, hosted by the Institute of Highway Engineers, demonstrates the importance of traffic signing within the traffic management industry, and I am delighted to see it so well attended, and with such a strong programme.

**Good signing**

As you've already heard this morning, we have been taking a fresh look at the way traffic signs are designed and used, and the policy paper 'Signing the way' sets out our proposals for revising traffic sign legislation.

Since its publication in October 2011, I have charged the traffic signs team with developing ideas for a new format for the regulations - one that retains national consistency while providing local authorities with greater flexibility to use signs that suit their particular circumstances.

**Peer review**

Before finalising our policy proposals, in May we took the opportunity to hold a peer review - both to update interested parties on our current thinking, and to seek their views before proceeding further. I am grateful to the IHE for its contribution to this process, and I know Graham Hanson and his team will be talking about the results during the day.

**Sign lighting**

It is not surprising that one of the more high profile areas of the policy review has been sign lighting. I know there are some strong views both for and against relaxing the current requirements, so that is why I wanted to seek views from interested parties.

Having done so, I have decided to retain the current lighting requirements for safety-critical signs such as those relating to low or narrow bridges, regulatory terminal signs including 'Give way' and 'No entry', as well as for stop signs, two-way traffic signs, and motorway entry, exit and gantry-mounted signs.

By contrast, once the successor to TSRGD comes into force in 2015 I have decided that it will no longer be necessary to light signs, either for lane closures and contra-flow working at road works, or those mounted on bollards in street lit areas. I know the latter will be welcome news for many traffic authorities.

In addition, traffic authorities will have discretion over the lighting of warning signs, regulatory cycle signs and those within 20 mph zones and 20 mph limits.

**Speed limits**

On the subject of speed limits, the department issued revised speed limit guidance in January this year. We also launched a new web based speed limit appraisal tool to help local authorities assess the full costs and benefits of proposed speed limit schemes.

The guidance is aimed primarily at local traffic authorities who are responsible for setting speed limits on local roads. But it is also designed to help wider understanding of why and how local speed limits are determined. It incorporates recent changes that have increased flexibility for local authorities to implement 20 mph limits and zones where it can be shown that they benefit road safety and quality of life.

The guidance also asks traffic authorities to consider the introduction of more 20 mph limits and zones, over time, to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists. I have also met with Suzette Davenport, the relevant Lead Member at the Association of Chief Police Officers, about rewriting their guidance on the enforcement of 20 mph limits, to ensure that they are policed in the same regards as other speed limits. The benefits of increased 20 mph areas are being seen up and down the country. I am pleased to see that in my own constituency a combination of 20 mph limits and zones has recently been introduced in Lewes town centre.

It is also hoped that the removal of the requirement for sign lighting within 20 mph zones and limits will further incentivise authorities to consider such measures.

### **Sign clutter**

We have already put measures in place to reduce sign clutter. For example, except for speed limit signs, only one sign need be placed at the start of a restriction. Beyond that, traffic engineers are now trusted to determine the appropriate level of repeater signing at particular locations - rather than having to adhere to pre-determined intervals set in TSRGD.

Authorities may now use sympathetic materials to delineate parking bays in high quality streetscapes that would otherwise be spoiled by white paint.

Furthermore, earlier this year we published advice on reducing sign clutter. It provides guidance on how to remove old, confusing and ugly traffic signs as cost-effectively as possible.

In London alone 8,000 repeater signs and 4,000 poles installed in the early 1990s have been ripped out. In Hampshire 200 traffic signs have been taken away along a 12 mile stretch of the A32 while in Somerset 1,000 signs have been removed.

To demonstrate the department's commitment, in June we sponsored an award ceremony through the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation for the best scheme to reduce sign clutter. The award was well received and attracted a large number of high quality entries. One aim of the award was to encourage authorities to share their knowledge and good practice, so I am delighted that two of the winners are here today to do just that.

But there is still much more that the department can do to help, and we are looking at other opportunities to further reduce the environmental impact of signs and markings.

### **Restricted Parking Zones**

Traffic authorities already have a range of tools at their disposal to tackle sign clutter without the need for authorisation from the Department. These include the use of restricted parking zones, whereby yellow line markings are dispensed with in favour of gateway and repeater signing. I will soon be writing to Chief Executives of each English traffic authority to draw their attention to the benefits of restricted parking zones.

### **Cycling reform**

Cycling has always been important and never more so now that the number of cycle journeys is increasing. Throughout the Traffic Signs Policy Review we have been working with Transport for London and Sustrans to understand how we can improve conditions for cyclists and, again, I am delighted to see that Sustrans are represented among today's speakers.

We've already brought about improvements for cyclists by allowing traffic authorities greater freedom to introduce contra flow cycling along less busy roads. At busier locations I have also authorised the use of 'Trixi' mirrors throughout England to improve cyclists' visibility at signalised junctions.

By making it easier for authorities to bring vehicle speeds down to 20 mph, as I highlighted earlier, cyclists will further benefit from safer roads. Indeed all of the successful Cycling Ambition Grant cities have plans to introduce area-wide 20 mph speed limits as part of their programme to make city streets more cycle friendly.

But there is more work to do. We are currently working with Transport for London on a range of off-street trials, including include low level mini-signals for cyclists, and different roundabout designs to reduce the speed of vehicles to provide a safer route for cyclists. To provide a head start at traffic lights, we've also allowed a trial of cycle filter signals in Cambridge - as an alternative to placing advance stop lines. Subject to the outcome of these trials we will consider including these measures in revised traffic signs=regulations which will deliver in 2015.

I hope this short speech shows we are working to help you get the best out of our road networks. However we cannot do it alone - we need your help to deliver these changes on the ground.

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## **House of Commons – Commons Select Committee Reports**

The New European motorcycle test: Govt Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2009-10

### **Introduction**

The Government introduced the new two-module motorcycle test in April 2009, to comply with the Second European Driving Licence Directive. A review into the motorcycle test and associated training issues was announced in June 2010. This followed concerns raised by motorcycling groups, and in the Transport Select Committee's report about the new off-road motorcycle test module.

The Department for Transport wrote to the Committee in June 2010 to provide assurance that during the course of the Motorcycle Test Review, comments made in the report would be taken into account and that we would provide a full response when the review concluded, if required. We also undertook to write to the Committee periodically with an update on the test review.

**As part of the test review, research was commissioned to consider the feasibility of a single event on-road test. This research, which ended in March 2013, used test-ready learner riders to complete the proposed on-road manoeuvres and the existing module 1 manoeuvres under mock test conditions. Direct comparisons were then made between the on-road and module 1 test.**

The research concluded that an on-road test:

- would result in a substantial increase in the number of incidents during tests;
- increased the duration of the test, which would result in higher costs for both candidates and the Driving Standards Agency;
- resulted in significantly more faults than the off-road test; and
- was likely to encounter technical difficulties in identifying suitable on-road sites with appropriate signage and suitable speed measuring equipment.
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The main findings of the research report can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/motorcycle-manoevres-review-the-feasibility-and-safetyimplications-phase-1>

The Government has therefore decided that a single event on-road motorcycle test would not be in the interests of motorcycle test candidates or their trainers and examiners, and as a consequence, the test review has now been concluded.

The Government's response to the Committee's recommendations is set out below.

### **The new motorcycle test**

**Recommendation 1.** It is difficult to see why the Government failed to obtain derogation from the 50 km/h speed requirement for certain elements of the Module 1 test. Testing riders at a speed which exceeds the standard limit in built-up areas is both inconvenient and confusing for candidates. Requiring test candidates to drive according to a scale of measurement not widely used in the UK is bizarre. Furthermore, the absence of derogation serves to limit the options available to future Governments, who will not be able to merge the Module 1 test elements into the Module 2 on-road test, should they wish to follow the example set by some other EU Member States. It is unacceptable that the Minister was unable to offer any satisfactory explanation for the Government's decision not to seek derogation. (Paragraph 21).

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) did not seek derogation from the Directive's requirement to execute an avoidance exercise and an emergency braking exercise at a minimum speed of 50km/h. DSA's paramount concern was road safety. To conduct the special manoeuvres on public roads posed an unacceptable risk to the safety of the candidate, examiner and other road users if an incident occurred.

However, Driving examiners are asked to explain to candidates that 50km/h is about 32mph to ensure that candidates understand the speed requirement for the higher speed manoeuvres.

The test review fully investigated the feasibility of a single event on-road test. However, as outlined above, research has concluded that this would result in a substantial increase in the number of incidents and increase the duration of the test, which would result in increased costs for both the DSA and test candidates.

#### **The relevance of the Module 1 off-road test**

**Recommendation 2.** The new off-road test, combined with the extended on-road test (Module 2), could be an important step towards improving the skills and judgement of motorcyclists on our roads. Module 1 tests agility, control and assessment of speed, distances and braking scenarios and we think it is appropriate that this should take place in the comparative safety of the off-road environment. Module 2 tests the rider's ability to assess real situations on the road as well as the interaction with other road users. It is, however, important to take account of concerns expressed by the motorcycle industry, and consider what adjustments might be required. (Paragraph 24)

The Government agrees that the views of the motorcycle industry should be considered carefully.

Accordingly, representatives from the motorcycle industry, training and rider representative groups, road safety bodies and officials from DSA and DfT have worked together to review the delivery and content of the practical motorcycle test. This work identified a number of changes that could be introduced to Module 1 of the practical test, while the main test review was still in process.

These interim changes, introduced in May 2011, re-ordered the manoeuvres of the module 1 test to introduce greater flexibility in the way that a rider's speed is assessed during the higher speed exercises.

Although the exercises remain the same, the order in which they are delivered changed so that the slow speed exercises are carried out before the higher speed exercises. This allows candidates to demonstrate the necessary competence in motorcycle control before moving on to the more demanding manoeuvres; it also gave them the opportunity to build up their speed gradually for the higher speed manoeuvres, which reduced the risk of them riding too fast.

These changes were designed to address those aspects that stakeholders felt needed to be changed and were welcomed by both examiners and trainers and have resulted in fewer incidents, particularly during the hazard avoidance exercise.

More detail is set out at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/stories/dsa-news-20110328>

**Recommendation 3.** The rate of incidents and accidents occurring in Module 1 tests need to be monitored carefully, and the DSA needs to react without delay if incident levels do not decline. The DSA must be prepared to make adjustments to the test design if required, and it must work closely with the industry to ensure that candidates only attempt the test when they are genuinely ready for it. This requires a culture

shift, and the DSA must help and encourage the industry in every way possible to achieve this. (Paragraph 26)

As with tests for all vehicle categories DSA records and investigates any incidents that occur during the Module 1 test. Any serious incidents are followed up with the trainer and support and guidance are offered.

As set out above, changes have been made to the Module 1 test, following discussions with stakeholders; this also includes flexibility of speed assessment for the higher speed manoeuvres. Candidates who fail to reach the minimum speed requirement of 50km/h but achieve 48 or 49 km/h will not be asked to repeat the exercise; a rider fault will be assessed in addition to any other control or observation faults.

DSA has made the manoeuvring areas at test centres available for trainers to book familiarisation sessions so that trainees can practice the manoeuvres.

Since the introduction of the Module 1 and Module 2 tests, we are encouraged to see that the early attitude from some candidates to 'give Module 1 a go' before they have properly prepared and are ready to attempt it has declined. We have seen a 10% increase to the Module 1 test pass rate from 60.8% in 2009-10 to 70.5% in 2012-13. The pass rate for Module 2 has remained fairly constant at around 69%. This compares favourably with pass rates for car drivers which are currently 47%.

**Recommendation 4.** There is no doubt that training and instruction for the motorcycle test needs to develop and change to reflect the new test requirements. This is not a bad thing. It provides an opportunity to raise standards and develop a culture where good training is encouraged and valued. (Paragraph 27)

The Department shares the Committee's view that standards of instruction could be improved. We are already seeing some evidence that this is happening - examiners are reporting that candidates are presenting better prepared for test. This is reflected in the increased pass rate for Module 1, as outlined in the response above. DSA regularly publishes information about incidents on training (Compulsory Basic Training and the Direct Access Scheme) and accompanying guidance to inform trainers of common rider errors so training programmes can be organised to address those issues throughout a learner's pre-test training. Please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ins05-compulsory-training-and-incident-statistics>

Furthermore, DSA has worked with the rider training industry to create the National Standard for riding mopeds and motorcycles<sup>TM</sup>, which sets out the knowledge, skills and understanding that are required to be a safe and responsible rider. DSA has also published the National Standard for driver and rider training<sup>TM</sup>, which aims to enable trainers to evaluate and develop their own knowledge, understanding and skills. These standards are becoming more widely adopted by the training industry.

**Recommendation 5.** The off-road motorcycle test effectively bars candidates from adapting their riding to reflect the prevailing weather, road and other circumstances affecting their stopping distances. This cannot be appropriate, and we urge the Government to amend the regulations on this point as soon as possible. We note that it is the Government's implementation rather than the EU Directive which has caused this problem. It should therefore be straightforward to rectify. (Paragraph 29)

The Module 1 test and manoeuvring areas have been designed to allow sufficient margin for all but the most extreme weather conditions when testing would be stopped anyway. Extensive trials with trainees in a variety of weather conditions showed that, provided candidates are properly trained, they should be able to carry out the exercises safely.

### **Multi Purpose Test Centres (MPTCs)**

**Recommendation 6.** The justification for the introduction of Multi Purpose Test Sites (MPTCs) is weak. It has not enabled the DSA to make significant savings, and only a very small capital gain has been realised.

Instead, it appears to have caused significant cost and inconvenience to test candidates and trainers, with little apparent gain. The way in which the DSA weighted the convenience of consumers relative to other considerations was flawed. (Paragraph 42)

Following the decision to conduct the slow and higher speed manoeuvres off-road to protect the safety of candidates, examiners and other road users, DSA initiated a programme to acquire and develop MPTCs to provide secure off-road testing areas.

The recent merger between DSA and VOSA will provide an opportunity to further review delivery options and service levels for the joint testing estate.

**Recommendation 7.** The fact that it has been possible to adapt the new motorcycle test to be performed at much smaller casual sites clearly suggests that the test could have been designed for smaller sites. Other countries in Europe have been able to implement the new motorcycle test without resorting to 'super test sites'. (Paragraph 43)

It is not true to say that DSA has utilised much smaller casual sites. The requirement for a site of a particular size is determined by the length of tarmac needed for a rider of a small motorcycle to reach the speed required for the manoeuvres and then bring the motorcycle to a stop. However, DSA has been able to reconfigure the layout of the exercises to make use of some casual sites, for example by utilizing longer, narrower pieces of land, as opposed to the usual rectangle-shaped site.

DSA has continued to seek additional suitable sites from which to conduct Module 1 and 2 tests to improve accessibility for candidates. DSA has opened 3 additional sites for module 1 tests and has recently announced 8 more sites for module 2 tests.

DSA has reviewed a large number of potential sites, many of which were identified by trainers.

Unfortunately most of these were not suitable. For instance, several suggested their local supermarket car parks but these are not empty expanses of tarmac. They contain street furniture such as lamp posts, trolley bays, drainage gulleys and planters, as well as the potential hazards to and from other vehicle users.

Where possible a more flexible approach to acquiring sites has been adopted. However, the use of casual sites in areas where large numbers of tests are conducted can be problematic and is not the best solution.

For example, the location of Silverstone Race Circuit is ideal to provide additional testing facilities; however the service it can provide is disrupted during the summer months because of the motor racing programme.

**Recommendation 8.** The implementation of the decision to develop MPTCs has been inept. Despite a very lengthy lead-in, it appears to have come as a surprise to the DSA that there were difficulties in getting planning consent for the large test sites. The delay in launching the test and the scramble to implement temporary measures, including a modified test suitable for much smaller test sites has undermined the case for MPTCs in the first place. It has also severely damaged the trust of the motorcycling community in the DSA. It will take a long time and much resource to mend what has been broken, but the Government and the DSA now need to take urgent action to establish a way forward in collaboration with the industry. (Paragraph 44)

The Government recognises that there were some teething troubles in the introduction of MPTCS, but does not believe that the blame for this can be laid solely at the door of DSA. Considerable attention and resource was applied over four years to assemble and develop suitable sites and to explaining planning applications to local planning authorities. Unfortunately some authorities were unsympathetic to planning applications even though they wanted a local centre.

DSA and DfT have worked with stakeholders, including the motorcycle industry, and the test review has provided improvements for both candidates and trainers. The test booking process has been improved by actively monitoring trainer booking and introducing an on-line booking system. To further improve accessibility, DSA is continuing to work with trainers to identify additional Module 1 sites, in areas that are less well served.

### **Wider impact of the new test**

**Recommendation 9.** There is no doubt that the introduction of the new motorcycle test and Multi Purpose Test Centres has had a significant impact on the motorcycling industry in the UK. So far, this impact has been primarily negative. Although we have no reason to believe that the decline in demand for training and

tests is permanent, the temporary dip in demand is critical to parts of the industry. The Government needs to support the industry better in alleviating these problems, and assist it in developing and harnessing the opportunities that also arise from the new test regime. (Paragraph 55)

Critics of the new motorcycle test tend to link the change in the testing regime with the recent reduction in the number of people taking their motorcycle test. It is difficult to assess this accurately. However, we would always have expected numbers to peak just before the new test was introduced and to reduce slightly for the period after it; and we would generally expect the number of people taking their motorcycle test to be affected by the economic climate.

It should also be borne in mind that the changes which were made to the test were necessary in order to implement a European directive. The research on the feasibility of a single event on-road test has shown that requiring candidates and examiners to conduct this part of the test on the road would have resulted in a significant increase in risk.

DfT and DSA worked closely with stakeholders during the test review process and listened to their concerns. In addressing those concerns DSA made interim changes to the Module 1 test and also made a number of other improvements for customers taking motorcycle tests. For example, DSA worked closely with motorcycle trainers to address concerns around the trainer booking system, carefully understanding concerns and designing a new system, which has been very well received.

**Recommendation 10.** The development of better awareness of motorcyclists among other road users is crucial to the improvement of motorcycle safety. Whilst a significant proportion of motorcycle accidents are solo incidents, the high number of collisions with other road users should not be neglected. The DSA has already made good progress in incorporating this issue into the driving theory test, and we expect this approach to be developed further over the next few years. (Paragraph 59)

DSA and its partners are developing new technology designed to improve the theory test and ensure it reflects as accurately and realistically as possible the hazards a driver or rider may encounter. DSA will be able to incorporate awareness of all vulnerable road users into the test.

The Department for Transport's latest THINK! Biker campaign, which began in March to coincide with the spring increase in motorcyclist KSIs - reminds drivers to look out for motorcyclists, particularly at junctions.

The campaign was informed by accident statistics, which show that 30 bikers are killed or injured every day at junctions and that motorists failing to look properly is a factor in half of all collisions where motorcyclists are killed or seriously injured at a junction; and wider research showing that drivers are more likely to notice motorcyclists on the roads if they know a motorcyclist themselves.

**Recommendation 11.** The voluntary registration of motorcycle instructors should now be made mandatory. (Paragraph 61)

The Government is committed to reducing regulatory burden on business, in particular small businesses which is the demographic of most motorcycle trainers. At the moment, it is unlikely that a mandatory register would be introduced. However, DSA recognises the importance of raising the standards of motorcycle training and has introduced improvements to the standards check regime for instructors. This is conducted on a risk based approach in line with the National Standard for driver and rider training<sup>TM</sup>

**Recommendation 12.** It is important to get the test for new motorcyclists' right, but the crucial objective of reducing deaths and serious injuries among motorcyclists is unlikely to be met without renewed emphasis on the way learner riders are trained. The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) needs to focus on developing the consistency and quality of training in the Compulsory Basic Training, and beyond. The development of good skills and judgement of situations on the road is important, but training needs to focus equally on developing the attitudes of riders. The DSA needs to take the lead in raising training standards by developing strategies to support the training industry rather than simply imposing additional burdens on it. (Paragraph 63)

DSA has already introduced improvements to address raising the standards of training and will continue to do so. In publishing the National Standard for driver and rider training<sup>TM</sup>, and basing the quality assurance of training on these standards, DSA has already seen an improvement in the standard of training that is provided.

In the context of the Department's work on the Young Drivers Green Paper, we have also been considering young motorcyclists. We have noted that collisions involving young motorcyclists are more likely to be attributed to their inexperience than those involving young car drivers.

Given that these motorcyclists should have at least received Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) relatively recently, we need to consider how that training might be improved, so that young motorcyclists are trained more effectively and are able to react well to challenging riding situations. The Green Paper will provide an opportunity to consult on options for addressing these issues and we will also be undertaking research to ensure that we understand the impact of the training industry of any changes to the CBT.

**Recommendation 13.** The Government needs to collect the necessary data and monitor very carefully whether there is an increase in unlicensed motorcycle riding. If such riding were to increase, the best way forward is not to relax the requirements of the motorcycle test, but rather to strengthen enforcement. (Paragraph 65)

A new variable has been added to the road accidents data collection process, which will be used by a number of police forces allowing the collection of information on whether the driver or rider has a licence appropriate to the vehicle type driven. In due course this should provide useful information on motorcyclists involved in road collisions with provisional as opposed to full licences, or no licence at all.

To directly monitor the number of people riding on the public highway, without having passed a test, would require a large scale exercise of pulling over a statistically representative sample of motorcyclists on the road and interviewing them to establish their licence status. This would be a significant undertaking necessarily involving the police and Ministry of Justice.

**Recommendation 14.** There is little doubt that the Government has exceeded what was necessary to comply with the EU Directive in terms of motorcycle testing. It is less easy, however, to judge whether other objectives can justify the approach taken. There is no question that the current rate of deaths and serious injuries among motorcyclists requires decisive Government action. In doing so, the Government has to balance measures to reduce road deaths with the need to ensure the continued health of the motorcycle training industry. We believe the Government was right to go beyond the minimum requirement of the Directive in some aspects of the test, including the addition of an off-road test (Module 1) to the expanded on-road practical test (Module 2). It is the development of Multi Purpose Test Centres which represents the least effective element of the implementation of the Directive. (Paragraph 68)

As mentioned earlier in this document, DSA will continue to seek additional sites for both Module 1 and Module 2 tests to further increase accessibility.

#### **Handling by the Driving Standards Agency and the Department for Transport**

**Recommendation 15.** Overall, the Driving Standards Agency and the Department for Transport have handled the introduction of the new European Motorcycle test less well than we would have hoped.

Relations with parts of the industry and interest groups have been strained. The introduction of MPTCs has been very poor, and the failure speedily to rectify problems with the test booking service also served as an irritant to an industry already suffering the inevitable spikes in demand for training and tests either side of the introduction of a new test regime. Such experiences damage trust and mutual respect, and the DSA cannot afford to let the current situation run for long. (Paragraph 75)

The Government does not accept that the introduction of MPTCs has been poorly managed. We do, though, recognise that a combination of higher training standards, a two-part practical test and fluctuations in demand relating to the wider economic picture presented challenges to many motorcycle trainers as the market adjusted.

We have worked closely with stakeholders, including industry, during the entire process of the test review. Meeting regularly to decide the next steps of the test review also gave us the opportunity to listen to the concerns of our stakeholders and to agree a way forward. This has undoubtedly helped both sides to appreciate the others position. Since the onset of the test review, DSA has made a raft of improvements for stakeholders and customers taking motorcycle tests. These include improving the trainer booking process by introducing an online booking system, which allows trainers to request that DSA arrange additional test slots. This has been very well received by the training industry.

**Recommendation 16.** As we have said in different contexts before, the collection of robust and reliable road safety statistics is crucial. The Government needs to look urgently at the data required to make sound, evidence-based decisions about the motorcycle training and testing required to meet the objective of reducing deaths and serious injuries among motorcyclists. Current data is insufficient, and the DfT should ensure that changes are implemented quickly to ensure that adequate data is collected. (Paragraph 77)

The Government agrees that it is important to consider the evidence base when making decisions about motorcycle training and testing. STATS 19 data on road casualties can be very helpful, but there is a limit to the data which we can realistically expect police officers either to use their time to collect, or to know on arriving at the scene of an accident. As part of the Department's [5]-yearly review of STATS 19, it consults on additional questions which could be included. However, the inclusion of new questions must result in the removal of some old ones.

The Government undertakes research to inform changes to training and testing. Our forthcoming research on CBT will address consider some of the questions raised in paragraph 76.

## **Conclusion**

**Recommendation 17.** The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) has done some good work in relation to the new motorcycle test, but the dogmatic approach to some issues as well as the failure to introduce the test smoothly and on time is a matter of great concern to us. We expect to see rapid progress on the development of a more customer-focused approach to the booking and delivery of tests. This has implications for the number and geographical spread of test sites, site opening hours, practice sessions and test booking systems. (Paragraph 81)

Since the onset of Motorcycle Test Review DSA has made the following improvements for stakeholders and customers taking motorcycle tests in Great Britain:

- Identified where and when trainers want tests available. This has resulted in more test bookings being made available at times and dates that provided better access for motorcycle trainers and candidates;
- Increased its motorcycle examiner resource by targeted recruitment and encouraging existing examiners to relocate to areas of demand;
- Improved the booking process by actively monitoring trainer booking and introducing the new online business service;
- Further increased accessibility - DSA has opened 3 additional sites for module 1 tests and has recently introduced module 2 tests at an additional eight driving test centres;
- Improved rider standards - since the new 2-part motorcycle test was introduced, there has been an increase in pass rates;
- Continued to make the manoeuvring areas available for trainers to book familiarisation sessions so that candidates can practice the manoeuvres.
- Opened up additional motorcycle test slots to better match demand. Trainers are able to request that DSA arrange additional test slots by a facility linked to the online booking system. DSA monitors this activity closely to ensure they are responding to trainers needs.