

DSA ezine for road safety professionals

## Motorcycle testing set for overhaul

Following a review of the current two-part motorcycle test, the Road Safety Minister, Mike Penning, has published an interim report announcing plans to trial a new, single, on-road test.

The report is the result of work Department for Transport (DfT) has undertaken with motorcycle groups, training organisations and others since June 2010.

The test is currently carried out in two parts, one on-road and one off-road. But the interim report suggests a new hazard avoidance manoeuvre which - subject to further trialling - could be carried out on the road. There is also a proposal which will be given further consideration, that slow manoeuvres such as slalom, figure of eight, and U turn could be examined at training centres by delegated examiners ahead of the main test.







The next step will be to hold wider trials, with test-level candidates. This process will be followed by public consultation on the proposed changes.

DfT hopes, subject to further work on safety, cost and value for money, that there would be a phased introduction of on-road testing moving to general adoption of the new test by the end of 2011 or early 2012. This will include on-road testing in priority areas which are poorly served by the current network of off-road test centres.

Road Safety Minister Mike Penning said:

"My goal has always been a single, on-road test which is rigorous and reflects real-life conditions. By working with the motorcycle training industry and others we have identified a set of changes which have the potential to deliver this."

Read the interim report in full at:  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/drs/cyclingandmotorcycling/testreview>

-  The motorcycle test review started in June 2010.
-  The current motorcycle test was introduced in April 2009 and is taken in two parts.
-  **Module 1** contains the specified manoeuvres element of the test including exercises designed to assess the rider's ability to control their machine safely, including avoidance and emergency stop exercises.
-  **Module 2** includes an eyesight test and at least 30 minutes of on road riding

## Driving tests hit by record cold weather

Exceptionally cold and snowy weather affected much of the country last December, leading to widespread travel disruption and causing thousands of driving tests to be cancelled. Between 23 November and 23 December, over 64,000 practical car tests were lost due to the bad weather.

December 2010 was the coldest December across the UK in records stretching back 100 years and one of the coldest months ever recorded, according to the Met Office.

DSA doesn't conduct driving tests in adverse weather conditions, for example when the roads are snowy or icy, for the safety of both the person taking the test and the examiner.

"Safety is always our top priority," says Ashley Bateman, DSA's assistant chief driving examiner. "We make every effort to ensure that tests can go ahead, for example by re-designing test routes to avoid the worst affected roads, but unfortunately in some cases cancellations are unavoidable. When this does happen, another appointment will be re-booked automatically at no extra cost."



If there is snow or ice in the local area and candidates are worried their test might be cancelled, they should only call the test centre on the day of their test. If they call the day before, the test centre won't be able to tell them whether their test is going ahead as that decision is only made on the day. Examiners also regularly reassess conditions

throughout the day, so even if tests have been cancelled in the morning, testing may be able to resume later on.

The unusually high number of cancellations due to the recent bad weather means that waiting times in some parts of the country are likely to rise.

"Inevitably, the cancellations will have an impact on waiting times in some areas, but we're doing all we can to minimise disruption," says Ashley. "We're recruiting more examiners, and have also been offering more out of hours tests to help keep waiting times down."

More information on how driving tests can be affected by bad weather is available on [Directgov](http://www.direct.gov.uk).

### DESPATCH **VIDEO** LINK

Click to view: Driving tests in bad weather: what you need to do.

Reading the paper version? Here's the URL:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQHas2hyX7w>

## Teaching methods and ADI assessment

Alongside traditional methods, more instructors are extending their range of teaching methods to include what's known as 'client centred learning'. When using this approach, the instructor encourages the pupil to take a more active role in their learning.

An example of client centred learning is where rather than giving direct instruction, the instructor involves the candidate in finding their own solution and reflecting on the decisions they've



**?** Do you have experience of client centred learning?

If so, we'd like to hear your views. Email: [pressoffice@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)

made. This creates a process of continual self development.

"If used appropriately, the client centred approach to learning provides a valuable addition to the instructor's toolkit," says Trevor Wedge, DSA's chief driving examiner and director for safer driving. DSA has taken steps to raise awareness and appreciation of these learning techniques among staff involved in ADI assessment.

"Instructors with these skills should not therefore be afraid to present such teaching methods on check test," added Trevor.

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?lang=en&topicId=1082105847>

## How did we do?

Each year DSA asks its customers to take part in a satisfaction survey. Your feedback helps us understand which services work well for you and those that need improving. This year the survey is available online and only takes 10 minutes to complete.

### Take part in the survey

A survey for trainee instructors (PDIs) and LGV trainers will be available soon.

We are also conducting a customer satisfaction survey to gather feedback from practical test candidates. If you would like to encourage your pupils to take part, the survey can be found at [dft.gov.uk/dsa/consultation/candidate\\_survey](http://dft.gov.uk/dsa/consultation/candidate_survey) and closes 11 February.





## Lessons in independence

Driving instructor Lesley Philbey shares her experiences preparing learners for the new independent driving section of the test.

I have always tried to teach my pupils to drive independently. Each one is asked to drive themselves home at the end of their lesson once they are near home and know the route, and this has been very successful.

The independent drive has shown me more is required, however. I have found that pupils - although able to safely check mirrors, signal and conduct the manoeuvres to good standard - still lack something that experienced drivers need.



When driving home, they are in a very familiar environment and one that they have seen parents, friends (and me!) drive before, and are thus able to copy.



But when asked to perform three or four instructions in a row on less well known roads, I found they did each well in turn, but didn't think about the next instruction till they'd completed the first, thus often finding themselves in the wrong lane, or badly positioned when the next junction was almost upon them. Simply, they memorised the instructions, but then in effect instructed themselves as I would

have done, in order.

For example, on a recent test, my pupil was asked to turn left at the end of the road, then right at the traffic lights, then third road on the right. He successfully turned left onto the dual carriageway, but stayed in the left lane. When he started looking ahead for the next instruction, the traffic lights, he was only about 50 yards away, with other cars already pulling round him into the right hand lane. Simply by observing better before his first junction, he would have seen the lights and realised that he should turn onto the dual carriageway and move straight to the right hand lane.

He is a very capable driver, but needed to think several moves ahead for the independent

**?** Do you have an experience or story you want to share with Despatch readers?

If so, email us at:  
[pressoffice@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)

drive, something which I'm now more aware of and have been able to pass on to my other pupils. They are now far better prepared for driving after they pass than they were before the independent drive was introduced.

## 'How to be an eco-safe driver' video on YouTube

DSA has published a new video on its YouTube channel about eco-safe driving. Watch the video for tips on how to be an eco-safe driver and contribute to road safety as well as reducing your fuel consumption and vehicle emissions. If you run your own website you can embed the video, or share it on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. More information about eco-safe driving can be found at [direct.gov.uk/ecosafedriving](http://direct.gov.uk/ecosafedriving).

## Driving instructor awarded with MBE



Julia Malkin suffers from autism and Asperger syndrome. Severely bullied at school, she left with no qualifications and few professional prospects. A series of low paid jobs followed, but after witnessing a serious

road accident in 2003, Julia decided to train as a driving instructor. This decision would ultimately change her life.

Despite her learning difficulties, Julia not only qualified as an ADI, but went on to become one of the most highly qualified ADIs in the country. She now runs the Excel Driver and Instructor Academy, helping others with similar problems learn to drive, or become instructors themselves. She recently appeared on the BBC 3 documentary 'Autistic Driving School'. In January this year, she was awarded with an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for services to people with special educational needs. We spoke to Julia to find out more about her work and achievements.

**Q:** What problems do people with special educational needs face when learning to drive?

**A:** Most people with Asperger syndrome will suffer with distractions on the road, judgemental errors, panic in situations such as heavy traffic and problems understanding instruction if it is unclear. Pupils with dyspraxia will also have poor car control skills, while those with dyslexia could have problems with directions. And we suffer from nerves a great deal, and low self-esteem. So if something goes wrong we blame ourselves.

**Q:** For ADIs, what are the challenges of teaching people with special educational needs to drive?

**A:** ADIs will need many skills over and above normal ADI work. These are covered in Excel's 'Revolutions' course, and include special communication skills, control in emergencies, prevention of panic and correction of errors involving on-road distractions. Plenty of positive feedback is a must, as our self-esteem is naturally very low. And they'll need endless patience!

**Q:** How important is learning to drive?

**A:** To us, it means the same as it does to you - independence and freedom, as well as improving our job prospects. To us it can be the ultimate achievement.

**Q:** What does it mean to you to be recognised with an MBE?

**A:** To this, I will answer in similar terms to what I said on 'Autistic Driving School.' I want every special needs person to know that, whatever society thinks of them, they have the means to achieve if they get the support. I have achieved - so can they, and I am proof that they can. These people are the butt of society's jokes and are often written off. I want my MBE to stand as proof that people with special educational needs can achieve and we have much to offer society. I want the MBE to give hope to them and their parents and families.



To find out more about Julia, read her blog at <http://exceldia.wordpress.com/>, or see [www.excel-academy.co.uk](http://www.excel-academy.co.uk)



## A round up of this month's news

### Temporarily returning ADI certificates to DSA

Instructors can ask DSA to hold their ADI certificates if they will be working abroad for a lengthy period, or if they must temporarily refrain from giving paid tuition for medical reasons (in which case medical evidence must be provided). However, ADIs who wish to take a break from giving instruction for any other reason should keep their certificate and will remain liable for check testing throughout their registration period. For more information, contact the **Instructor Services & Registration** team.

### Cancellation of identity cards: changes to ID requirements

The government has passed legislation cancelling identity cards for British citizens. From 21 January 2011, those identity cards that have already been issued are no longer legal forms of identification. This means candidates can't use the identity card as a valid document to prove their identity for a practical driving test or for Driver CPC periodic training. For more information about the cancellation of identity cards visit [direct.gov.uk/identity](http://direct.gov.uk/identity).

### Closure of Cardiff area office

DSA has announced the closure of its area office at Caradog House in Cardiff. The office will close by 31 March 2012. The closure won't affect testing provision in Wales and DSA will continue to provide services under its agreed Welsh Language Scheme. Read the full press release at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/dsa/category.asp?cat=779>

### Change to LGV instructor registration renewal

LGV instructors will now receive a reminder to renew their registration six months before it is due to expire, instead of the previous one year notice period. See the LGV instructor pages on **Business Link**.

### Driving test expense claim form

The driving test expense claim form is no longer being sent out automatically with cancellation or rebooking letters. If you need to make a claim, the form can now be found online at [direct.gov.uk/motoringforms](http://direct.gov.uk/motoringforms)

Produced for DSA by  
Highways Agency Media Services,  
Manchester, P100246

An Executive Agency of the  
Department for  
**Transport**

## Get in touch

For the latest DSA news and information visit [dft.gov.uk/dsa](http://dft.gov.uk/dsa)

Information for candidates is available on [direct.gov.uk/motoring](http://direct.gov.uk/motoring) and driver and rider trainers can visit [businesslink.gov.uk/transport](http://businesslink.gov.uk/transport)

Book and manage your test appointments at [direct.gov.uk/drivingtest](http://direct.gov.uk/drivingtest) or [businesslink.gov.uk/transport](http://businesslink.gov.uk/transport)

A list of useful contact details can be found at [dft.gov.uk/dsa](http://dft.gov.uk/dsa)

What do you think of this issue of Despatch ezine? Email your comments to [pressoffice@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)



Follow us on twitter:  
[twitter.com/DSAgovuk](http://twitter.com/DSAgovuk)



Follow us on Facebook  
[facebook.com/trevorwedge](http://facebook.com/trevorwedge)



View DSA videos on YouTube:  
[youtube.com/dsagov](http://youtube.com/dsagov)