

# **Research Report**

## **Research with learner and novice drivers**

**Prepared for: Department for Transport**

**Prepared by: BMG Research**

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**Date: June 2016**

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Project number: 9988

Registered in England No. 2841970

Registered office:

BMG Research  
Beech House  
Greenfield Crescent  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 3BE  
UK

Tel: +44 (0) 121 333 6006

UK VAT Registration No. 580 6606 32

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Member No. B4626

Market Research Society Company Partner

British Quality Foundation Member

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	5
Background .....	5
Method .....	6
Key findings.....	6
1 Introduction.....	10
1.1 Research objectives.....	10
1.2 Methodology .....	10
1.2.1 Online focus groups .....	10
1.2.2 Profile of participants .....	11
Table 2: Profile of participants by socio-economic status .....	12
1.2.3 Analysis of qualitative data.....	13
1.2.4 Note on the interpretation of qualitative research and data .....	13
1.3 Report structure .....	14
2 Profile of participants .....	15
2.1 Demographic profile of participants.....	15
2.2 Experience of lessons so far .....	16
2.3 Duration of lessons and level of confidence .....	16
3 Motivations to learn to drive .....	18
3.1 Motivations to learn to drive .....	18
3.1.1 Spontaneous motivations to learn to drive .....	18
3.1.2 Prompted motivations to learn to drive .....	18
3.1.3 Motivations to learn to drive by gender.....	19
3.2 Value of having a driving licence and views on using it in the future .....	20
4 Overall experiences and views of driving .....	22
4.1 Method of learning to drive.....	22
4.2 Perceptions on the method of learning to drive .....	23
4.3 Perception of the hours of practise required.....	23
4.4 Views on road safety.....	25
5 Views and perceptions on the practical test .....	26
5.1 Factors informing individuals to book their practical test .....	26
5.2 Factors influencing individuals to book their practical test .....	27

5.2.1	Top three influential factors.....	27
5.2.2	Additional influential factors .....	29
5.3	Barriers to additional practise before booking a practical test.....	30
5.4	Factors influencing individuals to reschedule their practical test.....	30
5.5	Factors influencing individuals to ensure they are a safe driver.....	31
5.6	Views of those who have previously failed their test.....	32
5.6.1	Perceptions of readiness prior to taking the practical test.....	32
5.6.2	Advice for learners thinking about booking their test .....	33
5.6.3	Similarities and differences between those who had previously failed their test and learner drivers .....	34
6	Testing the proposed interventions .....	35
6.1	Views on the default date.....	35
6.1.1	Views on the default date.....	35
6.1.2	Views on the position of the simple message statement .....	36
6.2	Message statements.....	36
6.2.1	Views on the message statements.....	37
6.2.2	Intervention 2: Simple message .....	38
6.2.3	Intervention 3: Loss aversion .....	40
6.2.4	Intervention 4: Social norm + incentive to practise more .....	42
6.3	Additional hours of practise.....	44
6.4	Views on the email communication .....	45
6.4.1	Views on the content of the email communication.....	45
6.4.2	Views on the email subject.....	46
6.4.3	Perceived level of influence of the email communication .....	47
6.4.4	Improvements to the email communication .....	47
6.4.5	Suggestions following a debrief with the DfT.....	48
7	Conclusions and considerations.....	50
7.1	Conclusions .....	50
7.1.1	Overall experiences and views of driving .....	50
7.1.2	Understanding learner and novice drivers views and perceptions on the practical test.....	50
7.1.3	Views of those who have previously failed their test.....	51
7.1.4	Testing DfT's interventions.....	52
7.1.5	Areas for improvement.....	52

7.2	Further suggestions .....	53
7.2.1	Message statements and email communication.....	53
7.2.2	Learner and novice driver methods of practise.....	53
8	Appendix A: Online focus group topic guide.....	55
9	Appendix B: Copy of interventions explored with participants.....	61

## Executive Summary

### Background

The Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned BMG Research to conduct research with learner and novice drivers to gain their views and opinions of learning to drive and their perceptions on communications put together by the DfT.

Existing research shows that young drivers (aged 17 to 24) are at a much higher risk of crashing than older drivers. Drivers aged 17 to 19 only make up 1% of UK licence holders, but are involved in 9% of fatal and serious crashes where they are the driver.<sup>1</sup> Data on drivers in the UK shows one in four 18 to 24 year olds have an accident within two years of passing their driving test and young male drivers are involved in more crashes than young female drivers.<sup>2</sup>

Although novice drivers (e.g. those who have passed their tests in the previous 2 years) are at elevated risk of collisions after passing their test, their risk of collision has been shown to decrease rapidly with on-road experience (including pre-test practise). Factoring more safety education into the driving test experience such as helping young drivers identify potential hazards, teaching them how to handle them<sup>3</sup> and having more supervised on-road practise are seen as just some of the ways to help make novice drivers safer on the roads.

DfT in conjunction with the DVSA developed a randomised control trial to test the effectiveness of different communication interventions which are aimed at 1) encouraging learner drivers to get as much experience as possible before taking their practical test 2) to try and delay them in taking their driving test if they do not feel ready and/or 3) reminding/prompting them that they can re-book their test free of charge if they wish. These methods aim to increase road safety. There are two contact points at which the communications have been developed and look to explore:

1. The online booking system for the practical test, at the stage when the learner can choose a date for their test.
2. A new email, 2 weeks before learner drivers are scheduled to take their practical test.

The purpose of this research was to test the various communications put together by the DfT and explore individuals' views and opinions on how influential these communications are in encouraging young learners to delay their driving test.

The DfT were innovative in approaching BMG Research to carry out social research of a qualitative nature to inform the design of the different interventions and a randomised control trial. By scoping out the research context and obtaining the public's opinion the research was able to identify learner and novice drivers' views and perceptions towards various communications and provide informative insights on which would be most influential in them delaying or rescheduling their practical test.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.brake.org.uk/too-young-to-die/15-facts-a-resources/facts/488-young-drivers-the-hard-facts>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/467465/rrcgb-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/467465/rrcgb-2014.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.asdonline.co.uk/advice-centre/how-safe-are-young-drivers-on-the-road>

## Method

The research involved a qualitative approach comprising of six online focus groups which took place from 16<sup>th</sup> May to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2016. Participants who took part in the research included learner and novice drivers who were looking to book their practical driving test in the next six months. The composition of the online focus groups included four groups with learner drivers aged 17 to 24, one group with learner drivers aged 25+ and one group with learner and novice drivers who had previously failed their test in the last twelve months.

## Key findings

The qualitative research explored two key areas; 1) understanding learner and novice drivers' views towards various communications and the impact these communications have in delaying individuals to re-schedule their test and 2) learner and novice drivers' overall views and perceptions of learning to drive. The key findings from the research are as follows:

### **Key findings on communications being tested**

#### **Views on the default date**

When booking driving tests, the online booking system currently gives a blank box when people select the date for their test. Once the learner driver clicks on the box, the date which learner drivers select defaults to the date they are accessing the online system. The research explored participants' views on the default date being set to a particular date in the future; in this case the date was defaulted to 16 weeks ahead.

- There were mixed views amongst participants on the default date being pre-selected to 16 weeks ahead. Some suggest this is too far ahead and would be more likely to scroll back and find a sooner date.
- Those who felt the 16 week default date was about right suggested they would use the time leading up to their test to get as much practise as possible.
- Older participants (aged 25+) and females were more accepting of the 16 weeks default date compared with younger participants (aged 17 to 24) and males.

#### **Views on the message statements**

The research explored three sets of interventions put together by the DfT which included three to four message statements. Participants were shown two of the interventions; the key findings on the views and perceptions of the message statements are outlined below. See Appendix B for each of the message statements that were tested through the research.

##### **Intervention 2: Simple message**

- The position of the message statement was believed to work well with most suggesting it was situated in a good place on the web page.
- There were mixed views across the groups with some stating the statements were too formal while others perceived them positively and suggested they would better prepare learners for their driving test.
- The most preferred statement was: *It is recommended that you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.*
- Participants were positive about the tone of the statement suggesting it was encouraging and demonstrated that the DfT are looking out for learner drivers' safety.



- Most preferred the length of the statement and liked that it did not sound forceful or dictated what learner drivers should be doing in readiness to book their practical test.
- The majority liked the use of the word 'recommend' suggesting it catches their attention. Some stated it was a useful word to use as people were more likely to follow recommendations, particularly to reflect the importance of safety.
- Most participants suggested the message statement had some impact on influencing individuals to think about delaying their test, however, when comparing to the other interventions this was not the most effective.

### **Intervention 3: Loss aversion**

- Participants' views and opinions varied regarding the different statements in intervention 3, with some suggesting the wording of the statements was off-putting, discouraging them from booking their test. Others were positive about the statements and particularly interested in the facts provided e.g. the number of young learners who fail their test.
- The most preferred statement was: *Rushing to take your test and failing could cost you time and money in the long run. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.*
- Most participants preferred the tone of this message statement and suggested it sounds advising.
- This message statement was perceived to be particularly important in outlining the consequences of rushing to take a test in a more reader friendly way which learner drivers were more likely to read and absorb information about.
- Some suggested this statement would encourage them to think about practising more and it made learner drivers reflect on how confident they really are to take their test.
- The majority preferred this statement due to the mention of time and money implications if they failed their test and felt this would make individuals think about how much they have practised.
- Both males and females suggested this statement should incorporate the monetary value of the cost of the driving test to have the desired effect of influencing learner drivers to delay booking their driving test.
- Overall learner and novice drivers generally suggested this statement had an influence on them to think twice about how ready they are to book their test.

### **Intervention 4: Social norm + incentive to practise more**

- The initial views of the message statements in intervention 4 were that participants, particularly females, perceived these to be 'scary', 'hard-hitting' and 'fearsome'. However, on reflection many suggested that the statements would be most influential to make individuals think about their level of confidence and readiness to book their practical test.
- The most preferred statement was: *One in five road deaths occur in collisions involving a young driver. Practising more before your test could potentially be lifesaving. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise.*
- Overall most participants felt this statement made them think about the consequences of not practising enough for their test

- Individuals preferred the tone of this statement and indicated it came across as being more informative.
- A few participants outlined they disliked the use of the road deaths and suggested this should be replaced with statistics on accident rates associated with young learners to have the desired effect of delaying individuals to book their test.
- Older participants (aged 25+) suggested replacing the phrase 'young driver' with 'less experienced' to better reflect the different ages of individuals who learn to drive.
- Most participants indicated this statement was the most influential and advocated the use of the facts and statistics used. They also outlined that this statement had the biggest impact as it reflected the importance of safety.

### **Views on the email communication**

- Overall the email communication was received well with most participants suggesting they liked the idea of receiving an email before their practical test date and found the content beneficial.
- There were mixed views on how influential the test date would be in learner drivers delaying their test however most liked that they could rebook without losing their fee.
- The tone of the email was described as clear, friendly and professional.
- Most participants suggested the email communication should incorporate facts and statistics to have more of an influence in delaying individuals to reschedule their test.
- There were mixed views on the email subject however most suggested it is inviting and feels personal to them.
- Suggested improvements to the email communication included adding statistics on pass or fail rates, including information on accidents associated with young learners and signposting or including a link to a checklist to ensure learner drivers are confident they have learnt all the skills required to be a safe driver.

### **Key findings on overall views and perceptions of learning to drive**

- Convenience, practicality and socialising were the key motivations for individuals to learn to drive. Males were most likely to learn to drive for convenience and due to disliking public transport while females were motivated to learn to drive for reasons such as pleasure, socialising or for work commitments.
- A driving licence was considered to be valuable for participants in gaining independence, ability to keep to their own timescales and enabling wider flexibility for job opportunities.
- Participants suggested they would use their driving licence in the future for potential job opportunities, to socialise, as a form of ID or for travel to visit friends and family.
- The main method of learning to drive amongst participants was with a professional driving instructor. Some participants suggested they also have additional driving lessons with a friend or family member and both methods work well.
- Participants were asked how many hours of practise they expect to have before they book their driving test. Overall the majority indicated 30 to 40 hours is the ideal number of hours to indicate their level of readiness.
- The majority of participants suggested their instructor's views would influence them to book their practical test. Other factors included individuals' ability to do the manoeuvres without support, awareness of the test route and their ability and confidence in driving safely without assistance.

- When provided with a prompted list of influential factors to book a driving test, the top three were confidence levels, instructor views and hours of practise.
- Many participants mentioned time and money as barriers to having more practise before booking their test and there was a general perception that learning to drive as a whole is too expensive.
- Learner and novice drivers were asked what factors they think would influence whether they reschedule the test. Most mentioned they do not think about rescheduling their test however, the key thing that may make them possibly reschedule was their confidence levels. Other factors included weather conditions, time of day of the test and their personal availability.
- In order to identify the awareness of safety after passing a driving test, participants were asked what factors would influence individuals to ensure they are a safe driver. A range of responses were provided including the ability to recognise mistakes and improving on them in their lessons, awareness of road signs and sticking to recommended speed limits and being aware of other drivers.
- For those who had previously failed their driving test, they were asked about their perceptions of readiness prior to booking the practical. Most suggested they were confident they would pass their test at the time of booking and had enough practise.
- In terms of advice for learner drivers thinking about booking their test, those who previously failed provided a number of suggestions including ensuring individuals feel ready and confident, getting as much practise as possible and having awareness of the test route or area they are driving in.

# 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings from research delivered by BMG Research on behalf of the Department for Transport (DfT). The research explored learner and novice drivers' motivations to learn to drive and approach to learning, and investigated views on different interventions designed by the DfT to determine how influential they would be in learners' likelihood to delay/reschedule their driving test if they were not ready.

## 1.1 Research objectives

The DfT commissioned BMG Research in April 2016 to undertake a research study to understand learner and novice drivers' motivations and perceptions on learning to drive and explore their views on interventions proposed by the DfT to be included on the online booking system for the practical test and in the run up to the test. Specifically, the DfT wanted to understand:

- Individuals' motivations for learning to drive and expectations for how they will behave as car users in the future.
- How they are learning to drive and their preferences and the nature of their practise sessions.
- The factors which may influence when they choose to take their test, their perceived and preferred state of readiness, and their expectations of success/failure.
- The experience of those who have taken their test and the extent to which they feel they had sufficient practise prior to this and how this has affected them and their driving.
- Individuals' views and perceptions of DfT's proposed interventions and the extent to which these would influence them in delaying their practical test.

## 1.2 Methodology

### 1.2.1 Online focus groups

The recruitment of participants took place using an online panel provider to ensure a sufficient number of learner and novice drivers could be identified and approached. A screener questionnaire was designed by BMG Research with input from the DfT and provided to the online panel provider. The screener questionnaire was used to inform individuals about the purpose of the research and provided them with a range of dates for the discussion groups to select from according to their availability. The details of those who had demonstrated willingness to take part were provided to BMG Research who then sent an email to confirm their availability.

A key remit of the recruitment criteria was to ensure a representative mix of participants based on gender, age, ethnicity, numbers of hours of lessons taken and participants' confidence levels in their skills as a driver. Each participant was screened and recruited accordingly. During recruitment, potential participants were provided with an outline of the purpose of the discussion, an overview of the topics to be covered and a BMG contact should they have any queries regarding the research. To reimburse attendance to the groups, participants were provided with a £25 Love 2 Shop voucher as a thank you for their time. The reimbursement was increased to a £30 Love2Shop voucher after delivering two of the focus groups to maximise participation and ensure all quotas were met.

Six online focus groups were conducted with learner and novice drivers. Five focus groups took place with participants aged 17 to 24 and one took place with participants aged 25+. Fieldwork took place between the 16th May and 21st May 2016.

The online groups took place using VisionsLive which is a straightforward and visually appealing platform that allows both moderators and participants to conduct free-flowing conversations, explore specific participant's responses more explicitly in a private 'instant messages' window and allows the use of visual stimulus exercises using a whiteboard facility. Upon confirmation of taking part, participants were sent an email outlining the time and date of the group and a link to join the discussion. Text messages were also sent to those who had provided a valid mobile number on the day of the group as a polite reminder and to overcome any issues with those who may have not received the joining email.

Each online focus group was led by two independent researchers from BMG Research and lasted approximately 90 minutes. At the beginning of each focus group, participants were informed about confidentiality and assured that responses remain anonymous and any quotes used in report writing would not be attributed back to named individuals. Participants were also informed BMG Research abide by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct which reiterates participant confidentiality.

A topic guide for the online focus groups and supporting stimulus materials were designed by BMG Research in partnership with the DfT, and are appended to this report (Appendix A). During the online focus groups individuals took part in various activities including selecting specific words and phrases from a whiteboard to outline their motivations for learning to drive and ranking the most influential factors when booking their driving test. Participants were also presented with a number of interventions which included message statements and an example email communication to review and provide their thoughts on. These interventions have been explained in the report and a copy has been included in Appendix B.

### **1.2.2 Profile of participants**

In total 36 learner and novice drivers took part in the online focus groups. A breakdown of the profile of participants, including age, gender, ethnicity and region is provided in Table 1.

The composition of the online groups was designed to obtain views from a range of participants. Mixed gender groups were held to gain a range of responses, an over 25's group was held to ensure their views were taken in to account as learner and novice drivers and gender specific groups were held to remove any potential constraints of response in mixed groups. Differences in views by gender have been identified across all participants in our analysis.

BMG Research also held one group with those who had failed their driving test in the past twelve months to identify similarities and differences with those who plan to take their test for the first time in the next six months. Five participants in this group had recently passed their practical driving test on a subsequent attempt.

**Table 1: Profile of participants**

Online focus group	No. of participants	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Region
Group 1 - Plan to take test within the next 6 months	5	17 to 24	x5 Female	x4 White x1 Asian British	x1 Midlands x2 South of England x1 North of England x1 Other region
Group 2 – Have failed their test within the last 12 months	7	17 to 24	x2 Female x5 male	x4 White x2 Asian British x1 Mixed	x2 North of England X2 London x1 Midlands x2 South of England
Group 3 – Plan to take test within the next 6 months	8	25+	x4 Female x4 Male	x2 White x4 Asian British x1 Mixed x1 Unknown	x1 North of England x1 Midlands x2 London x4 South of England
Group 4 - Plan to take test within the next 6 months	6	17 to 24	x6 Male	x5 White x1 Other Ethnic Group	x1 North of England x2 Midlands x1 London x1 South of England x1 Other region
Group 5 - Plan to take test within the next 6 months	6	17 to 24	x2 Female x4 Male	x4 White x1 Mixed x1 Other Ethnic Group	x1 North of England x2 Midlands x2 South of England x1 Other region
Group 6 - Plan to take test within the next 6 months	4	17 to 24	x2 Female x2 Male	x3 White x1 Asian British	x1 North of England x2 Midlands x1 London

There were a mix of participants in employment and education as shown in table 2. Of those in employment, most were in a supervisory, clerical or junior managerial position. Most of the learner drivers in education were studying at AS/A-Level.

**Table 2: Profile of participants by socio-economic status**

Respondent Status	Breakdown of respondent status
Employment status	x12 full time employed x4 part time employed x15 in education x4 unemployed x1 Other
Participants in employment	x1 Higher managerial, administrative, professional x4 Intermediate managerial, administrative professional x9 Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial x1 Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers x1 Casual labourers, pensioners, unemployed
Participants in education	x10 AS-Level/ A-Level x3 Bachelors degree x2 GCSE's

### **1.2.3 Analysis of qualitative data**

A grounded theory approach to analysis was undertaken whereby all themes and findings reported against the key areas of interest will have emerged 'organically' through the online focus groups themselves rather than through hypothesis testing - thus making the overall findings more robust and grounded in the experiences and views of participants.

To achieve this once the online focus groups were completed and transcribed, they were analysed using a thematic framework analysis approach. This approach comprised an analysis grid (in Microsoft Excel), which enabled the classification and interpretation of qualitative data.

Firstly, the key themes and topics arising from the online focus groups were identified through the topic guide and an initial review of the transcripts. Each of the key themes and topics were then translated to a column heading in an Excel grid, with each row within the grid representing an individual case (that is, an individual learner or novice driver). Researchers analysed each transcript individually, by extracting relevant data from the discussions and summarising them into the appropriate cells within the grid. Verbatim quotations were included alongside the summaries where possible.

Once all of the feedback had been received, researchers reviewed and analysed the information within the final grid: a series of thematic tables of qualitative data representing each of the online focus groups and respondents who had participated in the qualitative research. Researchers read horizontally across the grid to obtain a full understanding of each individual's views and experiences, and read vertically down the grid to gain an understanding of the commonality of particular views in relation to each of the themes, as well as any differences between the participant types. Using this approach where particular themes and commonalities emerged between respondents these were included in the report. The views of individual participants are only included where they have had a very different experience to others to highlight specific instances where things have gone well or not well.

### **1.2.4 Note on the interpretation of qualitative research and data**

Online focus group discussions can provide an understanding of what people think, need, want and care about – and can explore the reasons behind those views. The researcher guides the participants through a series of topics (agreed beforehand with the client), but in a less structured way than with a quantitative (survey) questionnaire. Findings may emerge from online focus group discussions which the researcher and client had not previously considered; these can be identified and explored.

It is the researcher's job to ensure that all of the client's questions are answered and that every interviewee has an opportunity to express his or her point of view. It is important to note that in some cases due to the limited time available and to ensure a positive interview experience; sometimes the level of information on specific topics can be restricted, with some interviewees preferring to discuss certain areas of the topic in more detail. Where more general information was obtained, this will be highlighted throughout the report to ensure the limitations of this approach are noted.

It should also be remembered that participants may hold views that are based on incorrect information. It is the researcher's role to explore and report participants' perceptions, not necessarily to correct any misunderstanding or incorrect perceptions.

When interpreting the findings from the online focus group discussions, it is important to note that they are not based on quantitative statistical evidence. It should also be borne in mind that there is a tendency for such research to induce interviewees to express critical views. This report should be read with these notes of caution in mind.

When reporting the findings, terms such as 'several', 'some', 'many' and 'most' have been used to reflect the commonality of responses identified during the analysis process. It is important to note that where such terms have been used they refer solely to the participants, and are not therefore representative of all learner or novice drivers. Quotations have also been included in the report (in italics) to provide evidence for the views and experiences reported (both those that were more common, and minority views). It is important to stress that these quotations are verbatim and represent the views of the individual concerned. Quotations were selected for inclusion in this report on the basis that they met the following criteria:

- where inclusion of a quote does not mean an individual is 'over-represented' in the quotes;
- where a quote explains an issue more succinctly than could be otherwise described in the body text; and
- where a quote highlights a key issue discussed by interviewees in a succinct and clear manner.

### 1.3 Report structure

Following this introduction the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** provides details of participants' experience of lessons taken so far.
- **Chapter 3** outlines participants' motivations to learn to drive.
- **Chapter 4** demonstrates participants' experiences and general views of driving.
- **Chapter 5** explores individuals' views and perceptions on the driving test, particularly the factors which influence them to book their practical.
- **Chapter 6** presents the findings from the material testing exercise undertaken with learner and novice drivers to explore their views on the information and message statements and how these may influence them to reschedule their test.
- **Chapter 7** outlines the conclusions and recommendations from this research.



## 2 Profile of participants

The following section provides details of the demographic profile of participants, experience of lessons taken by participants so far, their hours of driving and their indicated level of confidence in their skills as a learner.

### 2.1 Demographic profile of participants

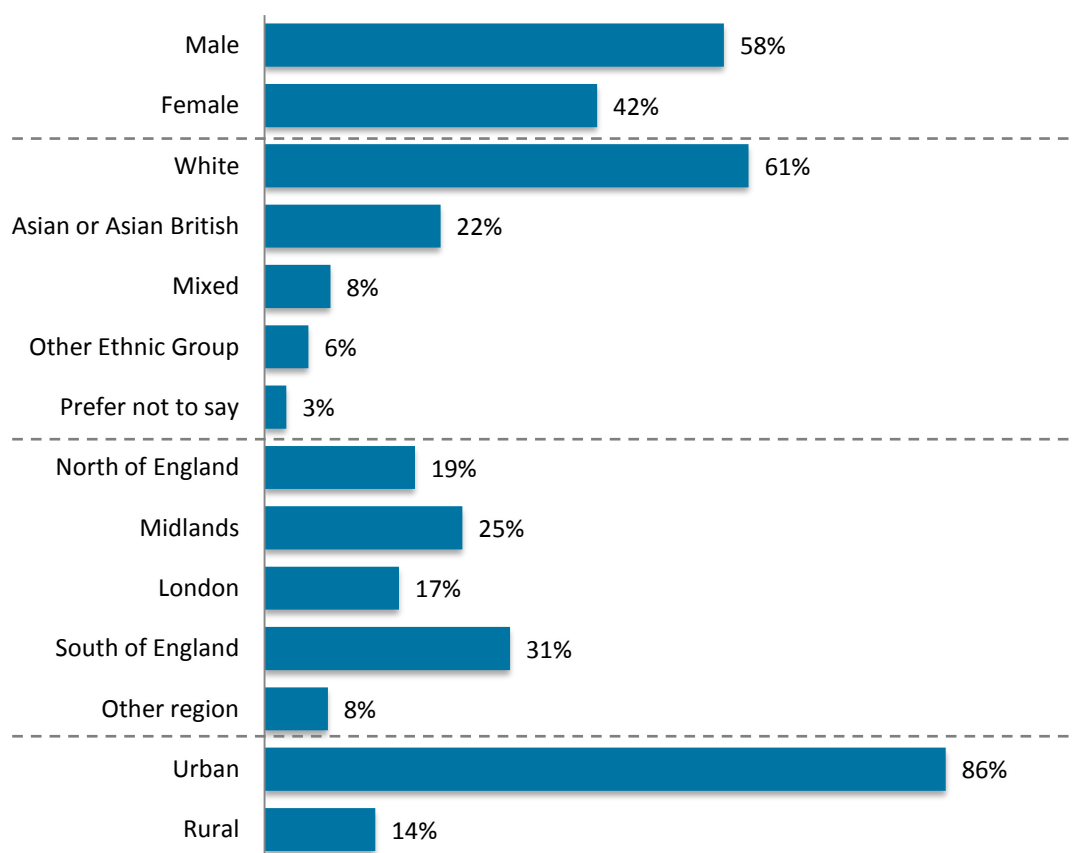
The demographic profile of learner and novice drivers who took part in this research is summarised in Figure 1.

Over half of the learner and novice drivers were male (58%) while around two fifths were female (42%).

In terms of ethnicity, most participants who took part in this research were White (61%), and around two in ten were Asian or Asian British (22%).

There is a good geographic spread of participants who took part in this research with around three in ten from the South of England (31%), a quarter in the Midlands (25%) and around two in ten from the North of England (19%) and London (17%). Additionally, the majority of respondents live in urban areas (86%) and around one in ten are from a rural area (14%).

**Figure 1: Profile of learner and novice drivers by gender, ethnicity and location (all respondents)**



Sample base: 36 (Low base size)

## 2.2 Experience of lessons so far

Most participants suggested they have one or two hour lessons once a week with a professional instructor. Some suggested they have up to four hours of lessons a week and these were typically with a combination of a professional instructor and a family member or friend.

Participants' experience of driving lessons ranged from one to eighteen months; however, most had been learning to drive from three to six months. Those aged over 25 stated they had been learning to drive for up to six months while most of those aged 17 to 24 had either recently started learning or had been learning for up to 18 months.

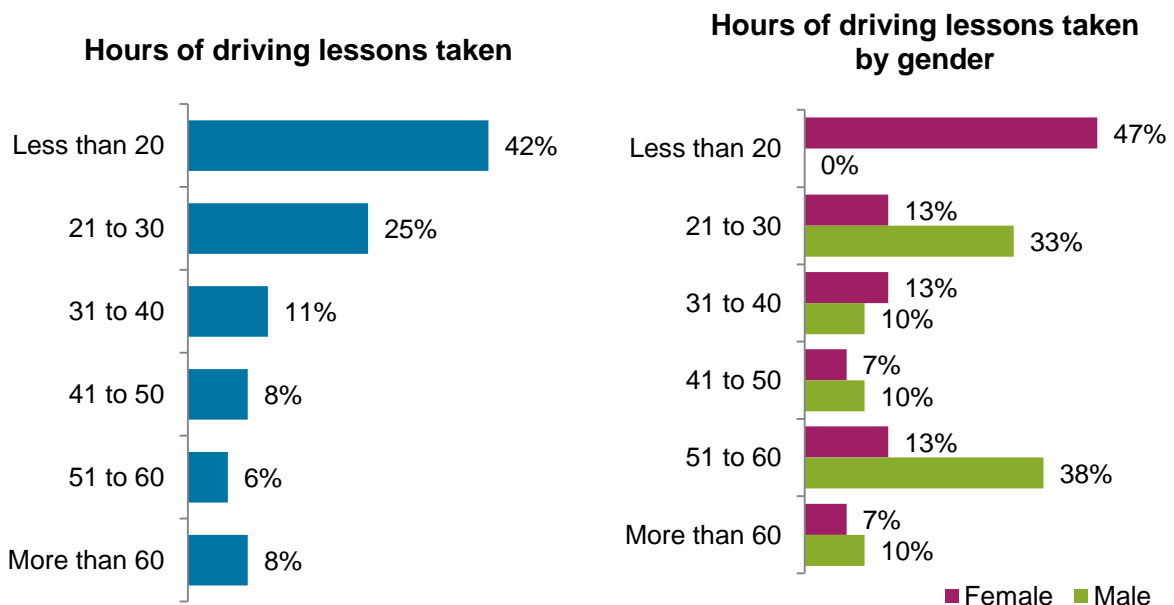
There was a fairly even split between those who had taken and passed their theory test and those who are yet to take their theory test. A small number of participants noted that they had previously taken their theory test and failed.

## 2.3 Duration of lessons and level of confidence

Around two fifths of participants had taken less than 20 hours of driving lessons so far (42%). A quarter had taken 21 to 30 hours of lessons and just under one in ten have had more than 60 hours of lessons (8%).

A higher proportion of females (47%) had less than 20 hours of lessons compared with males (0%). The majority of males had between 21 to 30 (33%) or 51 to 50 (38%) hours of lessons so far.

**Figure 2: Number of hours of driving lessons taken**

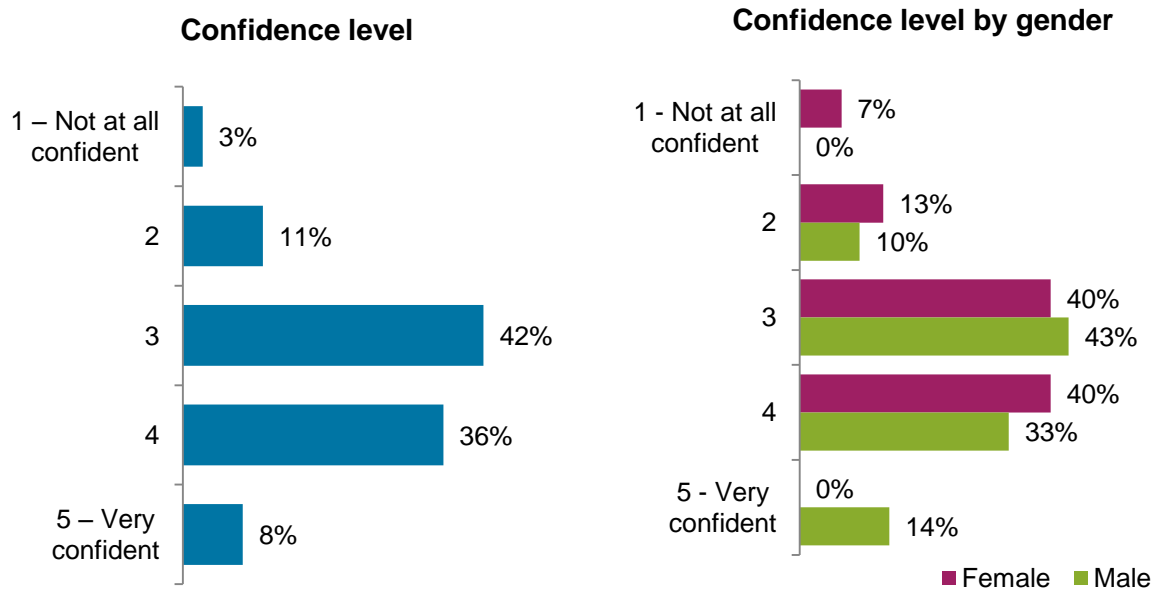


Sample base: 36 (Low base size)

The majority of participants were confident in their skills as a driver with around eight in ten rating a 3 or 4 (78%) on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was not at all confident and 5 was very confident. Around one in ten (8%) were very confident.

A higher proportion of males (14%) were very confident in their skills as a driver compared to females (0%). However, it is also important to note that those who suggested they are less confident had less experience of driving lessons so far (i.e. one to three months).

**Figure 3: Level of confidence in skills as a driver**



Sample base: 36 (Low base size)

When exploring differences between number of hours of driving lessons taken and confidence levels by gender, females who had less than 20 hours of practise were more likely to be less confident in their skills as a driver (rating 1 or 2). On the other hand although some males suggested they had 21 to 30 hours of driving lessons, they were more likely to suggest they were confident (rating a 3, 4 or 5) in their driving skills compared to females who had similar hours of practise.

## 3 Motivations to learn to drive

This section of the report outlines the findings from the research regarding participants' motivations to learn to drive and how they expected to use their driving licence in the future.

### 3.1 Motivations to learn to drive

#### 3.1.1 Spontaneous motivations to learn to drive

When asked openly about their motivations for learning how to drive most participants stated that they were motivated to learn to drive for independence or to ensure they could access a wider range and location of job opportunities. Being independent allowed them to have the freedom to keep to their own time schedule and visit friends/family without relying on their parents. They also suggested they want the freedom to get to and from school, university or work without relying on public transport.

*"I need to be able to get myself to and from school and work without having to rely on my parents as my timetables and hours are a bit randomised." (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

*"I want to learn how to drive before I finish university so I can commute to any job that is too far for public transport." (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

Participants studying at university were more likely to suggest their motivation to learn to drive was so they could have the option to be able to apply for jobs from a wider geography. Some also mentioned that having a licence could be a requirement or appeal to some employers.

*"It's a skill that would appeal to future employers." (Male participant, 17 to 24, South East England)*

*"I thought I needed to get it done before I started working more." (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

Some participants also mentioned that they decided to learn to drive as it is considered to be a good skill to have and they would get a sense of achievement by acquiring a licence.

*"Passing exams is not easy so passing exams means that I have certain standard of driving knowledge and relevant skills." (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, London)*

#### 3.1.2 Prompted motivations to learn to drive

Following this discussion, participants took part in a short projective exercise where they were presented with a variety of words and phrases (see Appendix A) and asked to select those that best describe their motivations to learn to drive. In line with the spontaneous reasons outlined above, convenience, practicality and to socialise were the key motivations.



'Convenience' was linked to independence in that participants expressed that they would like the option to be able to travel without relying on other forms of transport or their friends/family. Some also mentioned that having a licence and owning a car would make it easier for them to get around.

*"Being able to drive makes everything much easier and all my friends have cars so are able to do things that are inconvenient for me without a car." (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

*"Waiting for buses, walking to bus stops or train stations, is time consuming. A car takes you door to door, therefore being more convenient and practical." (Male participant, aged 25+, North West England)*

Those who selected the word 'practical' stated that they were motivated to learn to drive as it would be more useful for them when applying for jobs. Those aged over 25 also mentioned having a licence would save time getting to places and one mentioned it would make it easier to get around with their children.

*"I can go whenever you need to and saves time rather than travelling on buses." (Female participant, aged 25+, North East England)*

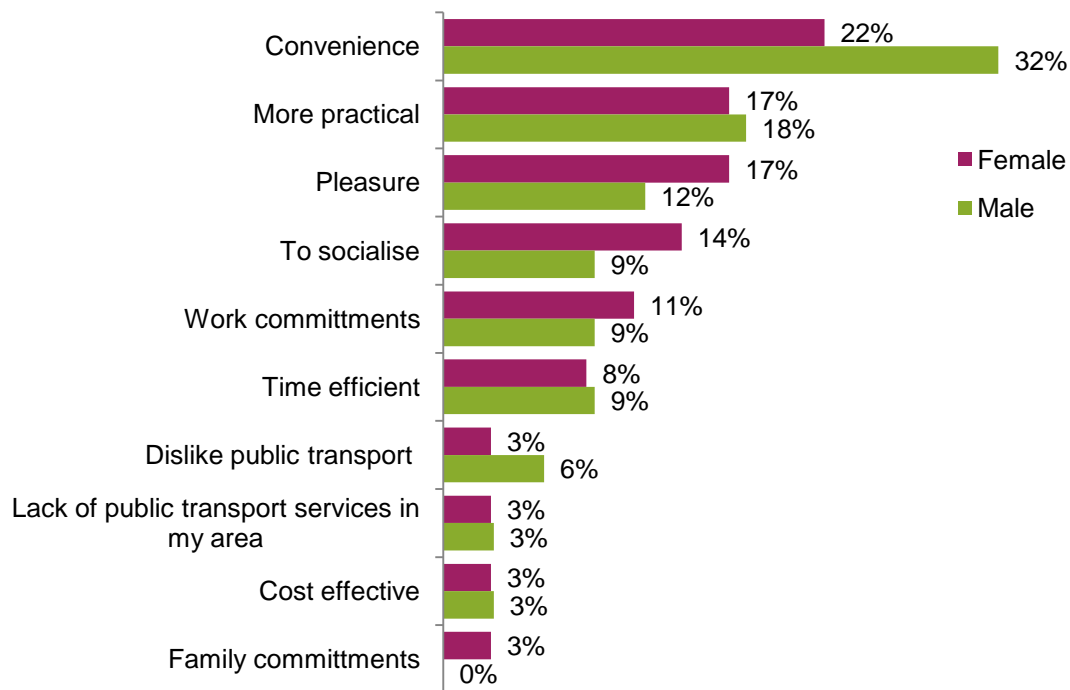
Socialising was also a key driver to motivate individuals to learn to drive; particularly for female participants who believed it would allow them to see their family more.

### 3.1.3 Motivations to learn to drive by gender

A higher proportion of males were motivated to learn to drive for convenience (32%) and disliking public transport (6%) compared to females (22% and 3% respectively). Those who disliked public transport were located in more rural areas and had limited transport links.

More females were motivated for reasons such as pleasure (17%), to socialise (14%) and for work commitments (11%) compared with males (12%, 9% and 9% respectively).

**Figure 4: Motivations to learn to drive by gender**



Sample base: 36 (Low base size)

### 3.2 Value of having a driving licence and views on using it in the future

Participants were asked what having a driving licence would mean to them. Similar to the findings for individuals’ motivations to learn to drive, most participants mentioned that having a licence would give them more independence to keep to their own timescales, enable wider flexibility for job opportunities and allow them to be less reliant on their parents or friends to travel to places. Some also believed that a licence would be recognised as evidence that they have achieved a certain standard of driving knowledge and skills.

When asked how participants expect to use their licence in the future, a variety of ways were mentioned. These can be summarised as:

- For potential job opportunities
- To socialise
- As a form of ID
- For travel

Most participants, particularly those aged 17 to 24, mentioned that having a driving licence would be valuable for future job opportunities. Some recognised that employers may require a licence while others perceived having a licence to be valuable to improve their job prospects.

*“Being able to drive/having a driving licence means to me that I am able to travel to family more easily, apply for jobs in locations that would be difficult to reach before and generally go where I want when I want which is important.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

Those aged 17 to 24 were more likely to suggest they would be using their licence to socialise in the future compared with those aged 25+. This finding also emerged more amongst females compared with males.

Participants also valued the ability to get to and from work or university independently and suggested they would be using their driving licence for work and learning related travel in the future. More of those living in rural areas suggested they would use their licence to travel compared to those in urban areas due to the lack of local transport links in their area.

*“I expect to use my licence in the future for a large number of things but I think that the most important things that I will use it for are driving to university and driving to work in the future.” (Male participant, 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

*“The public transport literally takes you to one place - the centre of the nearest city, and then you have to get another bus or two to go anywhere else, and that just takes sooooo long.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, East of England)*

## 4 Overall experiences and views of driving

This section of the report outlines participants' overall views of driving taking in to account their perceptions on the hours of practise required and other factors that may influence their driving capabilities before booking their test.

### 4.1 Method of learning to drive

The main method of learning to drive amongst participants was with a professional driving instructor. Some also had additional driving lessons with their parents or friends. Most participants chose to learn to drive with a professional driving instructor as they considered them to be experienced, particularly in teaching the different manoeuvres. They also perceived them to be skilled and knowledgeable in the different areas of driving.

*"I chose an instructor because they were able to give me the right skills to pass my test efficiently." (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

*"Family members don't always know the correct way to drive e.g. they have bad habits." (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

Some chose to learn with an instructor as they believed them to be more reliable in terms of having regular scheduled lessons which they could commit to.

Participants also learnt to drive with a professional instructor as they believed they would have more knowledge of the test route. This was important to participants so they felt confident about passing their test as well as them feeling more comfortable knowing they are familiar with the area they will be tested in.

A few participants suggested their motivation for learning to drive with an instructor was because they would be less likely to pick up bad habits with a professional and therefore pay full attention when behind the wheel. One mentioned that they did not have access to a car or know individuals who would be able to teach them; therefore a driving instructor was more accessible.

Finally, participants felt they were less likely to be irritated or their way of learning be dictated by learning to drive with an instructor compared to someone they know.

Those who were learning to drive with a professional driving instructor and their parents or friends suggested they chose this method of learning primarily as it was more cost effective. There was agreement within each of the discussion groups that the cost of driving lessons was too expensive.

*"With family you can spend more time for free." (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

*"I was a combo of both but mainly friends and family since the prices of a professional is expensive." (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

Females were more likely to suggest that they felt more confident driving with a parent or friend as it was someone they know and they intended to use these lessons to build on the skills they have learnt with their instructor.



Additionally, some participants chose to learn to drive with their parents or friends in addition to their driving instructor as it gave them more than one perspective on how to drive and they had greater flexibility in terms of the time of day and hours they could spend learning.

## 4.2 Perceptions on the method of learning to drive

Overall most participants believed their method of learning to drive was working well for them. Those who were learning to drive with a professional instructor mentioned they had been able to build a good relationship and rapport with their instructor and felt more comfortable driving with them the more lessons they had.

*“I think it is working well and makes me feel calmer knowing I am with a professional.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

Some report that they felt confident that their instructor was aware of their strengths and weaknesses so they could identify the areas they needed to improve on. As well as this most females felt their instructor helped boost their confidence in their skills as a driver.

A few participants also believed their way of learning to drive was going well as their instructor was patient with their development and gave regular feedback on their progress. One provided the example of their instructor using a 5 point check list to inform them how well they were doing and felt this worked well.

*“Usually your instructor will give you an idea, my instructor had a checklist and if you got mostly 5's across the checklist it was a good sign that you were ready for your test.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

Additionally, participants reported that they were more likely to pay attention learning with an instructor compared with learning with someone they knew. As well as this, they felt they were learning new skills in each lesson and were therefore maximising how much they were getting from the time and money they were spending on their lessons.

Those who were learning to drive with an instructor and a parent or friends reported that they had found this method worked well for them as they did not feel restricted or tied down to a specific time or date to learn and they were able to have more lessons in a shorter space of time without the cost implication.

A small number of participants also reported that learning what they had learnt with their instructor and practising with their parents or friends made them less likely to forget the skills they had developed and helped build their confidence.

In summary, when discussing the method of learning, most participant views were focussed on passing the driving test. Most of the comments related to using their way of learning to develop their confidence and learn useful techniques about driving. The focus for these individuals was to ensure their instructor or family/friend had a good level of knowledge and expertise as a driver to help them develop the necessary skills to obtain their licence.

*“I choose an instructor because they were able to give me the right skills to pass my test efficiently.” (Female participation, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

## 4.3 Perception of the hours of practise required

Participants were asked how many hours of practise they expected to have before they booked their driving test. Overall, there were mixed responses which varied between 20 and

50 hours; however, most believed that 30 to 40 hours was the ideal. The responses from males were most varied where some suggested 20 hours whilst others believed 50 hours would be the ideal.

*“I would have at least 50 hours of practise overall before my driving test, just to make sure I am confident in all the manoeuvres and know the test area inside out.” (Male participants, aged 25+, West Midlands)*

*“I think as much as possible at least 25-30 hours for me because you need to be experienced enough)” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

Participants mostly believed that 30 to 40 was the ideal number of hours as this amount of time would allow them to build their confidence and understand the different skills required for driving. They also felt this would be a sufficient amount of time for them to become aware of the areas they would be taking their driving test in.

One participant had visited the gov.uk website to identify the optimal amount of hours to spend learning, and it was advised that the average number of hours needed before passing was around 42. This participant tended to agree with the suggested number of hours and mentioned it is the number of hours of practise that counts in making them a more skilful driver.

Otherwise, most participants did not make any reference to the suggested numbers of hours on the gov.uk website, demonstrating minimal awareness of this. Some also mentioned their awareness and knowledge mainly comes from information provided by their instructor or previous learners.

Although participants provided their opinions on the number of hours they expected to have before booking their driving test, most were in agreement that the number of hours of lessons they would have would be largely dependent on their individual confidence levels. Females were more likely to suggest it depended on their confidence as they were less confident in their skills as a driver and generally felt they may need more than the average number of hours of practise. This finding emerged amongst females who indicated having fewer hours of driving lessons so far.

*“I’m not sure how many hours, I would like to practise as much as possible before I book it as I get very jumpy under pressure and would like to be very comfortable before I’d be tested.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

Those who had previously failed their test had between 30 and 40 hours of driving lessons before taking their test; however, prior to taking their test they were unsure of the number of hours they required as they had focussed more on their skills as a driver.

One participant (who had passed their test recently) mentioned they expected to have up to 100 hours of practise based on a self assessment of their progress after each lesson but managed to pass their test having completed 60 hours.

At this point of the discussion it became clear that passing the driving test was at the forefront of most participants’ minds. Their responses were related to how many hours of practise they would need to pass their test with very little consideration towards how that practise and the skills developed would be used after they had passed. Having said that, one participant did acknowledge that the skills of a driver are experienced more after passing their test.

*“I think you learn more after passing as its real experience whereas with lessons it’s a controlled area.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, London)*

#### 4.4 Views on road safety

Participants generally discussed very little on road safety during the early stages of the discussions. Their views towards booking their driving test were more focussed around their level of confidence, their skills and abilities as a driver and getting as much practise as possible to be confident to book and pass their practical.

A small number of participants mentioned they chose to learn to drive with an instructor as it made them feel safer but very few elaborated on this. When probed they mentioned the fact the instructor was more experienced and had the relevant information to ensure they passed their test.

*“When I feel that I am confident enough to be able to drive by myself and I feel I know how to drive the safest way.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

*“Health and safety always...because they know everything about driving and would tell you all details you need for driving and to pass as well.” (Female participant, aged 25 to 34, North East England).*

Some older participants (aged 25+) briefly discussed the importance of money versus safety and suggested that although learning to drive with an instructor can be more costly, they were more likely to feel safe learning with them due to their level of experience and knowledge and thus increased their confidence in learning to drive.

*“Obviously family and friends save money however I feel as though I’m more confident and safe with a professional instructor.” (Female participant, aged 25+, London)*

Although participants did not spontaneously discuss road safety, when prompted with questions around safety on the roads and what would make them a safe driver, they started to give this more thought. Some participants made reference to road safety in that they would want to get enough hours of practise to ensure they are safe on the roads.

*“Yes doing more hours of practise would help with ensuring you are a safe driver.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

Participants were also asked what factors would influence them to be safe driver. The findings from this have been outlined in section 5.5.

## 5 Views and perceptions on the practical test

This section explores participants' views on booking the practical test and highlights the different aspects that influenced individuals to book their test, any barriers to obtaining more practise before booking their test and the factors that may influence them to reschedule their driving test.

### 5.1 Factors informing individuals to book their practical test

Most participants had not booked their driving test at the time of the focus groups. The small number that had were amongst those who had previously failed a driving test.

Participants were asked a follow up question to describe when they were most likely to go on to the gov.uk website to book their practical test. The purpose of this question was to find out if individuals think about booking their test at the time they feel ready or whether they book in advance and use the time in between to ensure they are ready. The responses were evenly split amongst participants and a few provided reasons. For example, one suggested they would go on to the gov.uk website and book their test when ready as they would prefer to feel they are ready enough to do the practical exam and know they are confident enough to pass. A participant who would book in advance suggested the extra time would give them the motivation to ensure they were ready for the test.

Participants were asked how they would know, and for those who had previously failed, how they knew they were ready to book their practical test. A variety of reasons were provided which can be summarised as:

- Instructor views
- Ability to do the manoeuvres without support
- Awareness of the test route
- Ability and confidence to drive safely without assistance

The views of the instructor were considered to be influential amongst most participants due to their level of expertise and knowledge in the field of driving. They trust their instructor to inform them when they think they are ready to book their practical.

*“The instructor because of the experience that they have, I trust them to know when my driving is at the right level” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

Some believed they would know they are ready to book their practical test as they would be confident they can do the different manoeuvres safely and without any mistakes.

*“I mean when there are no mistakes and my instructor says that I do no mistakes” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

A few participants believed that they would know they are ready to book their test when they became familiar with the test route. They felt that this was important to be comfortable in the area they were driving in on the day of their test to calm their nerves and be confident to drive. Both males and females believed this was important.

Confidence was an important factor in determining how ready individuals felt they were to take their driving test. Females were more likely to suggest confidence as a factor in identifying if they were ready to book their test compared to males, particularly those who

had fewer hours of driving lessons so far were generally less confident in their skills as a driver overall.

*“When my driving instructor says I’m ready I guess and then if I feel confident enough” (Female participant, aged 25+, London)*

As well as confidence, some also believed they would be influenced to book their test once they felt they had built the skills to be a safe driver. Individuals made reference to the safety of driving by their ability to do the manoeuvres, drive on their own and feeling confident. These findings mainly emerged amongst female participants.

*“When I feel that I am confident enough to be able to drive by myself and I feel I know how to drive the safest way.” (Female participant, 17 to 24, South East England)*

A small number of participants acknowledged that waiting times can have an impact on whether they would solely rely on their confidence to book their practical test. Responses were mixed where some suggested they would go on to the online booking system when they felt confident in their abilities to pass while others mentioned if they felt near enough ready and were aware the waiting times were further ahead they would book their test and build their skills and confidence leading up to their test date.

*“If I think I’m almost ready and the waiting time is long I will book early and hope to be good in time.” (Female participants, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

*“The waiting time it took to book my test was long so I decided it would be best to book it and then build up to the test.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

## 5.2 Factors influencing individuals to book their practical test

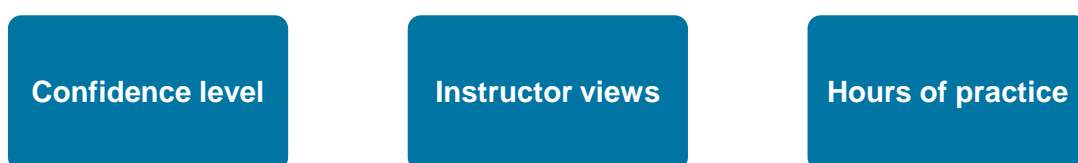
Participants took part in an interactive stimulus activity where they were provided with a list of factors that may influence their decision to book their driving test (this list can be found in Appendix A, stimulus 2). Participants were asked to look at the list of influences and tick the top three that would influence them to book their driving test.

### 5.2.1 Top three influential factors

There were a range of responses provided; however, the top three factors that had or would influence participants to book their practical test were confidence levels, instructor views and hours of practise (shown in Figure 5).

Around three in ten respondents suggested their confidence level (28%) would influence them to book their practical test. A similar proportion would be influenced by their instructors views (29%) and 15% would be influenced by the hours of practise they had undertaken so far.

**Figure 5: Top three factors influencing learner and novice drivers to book their practical test**



Participants’ confidence levels were highlighted as being the most important factor to influence them to book their practical test. Most suggested that they chose the word confident as they would not be booking their test unless they felt ready and were convinced they would pass.

*“I choose confidence because I think whether you pass your test or not is about how confident you are, a simple thing like nerves can cost you the whole test.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

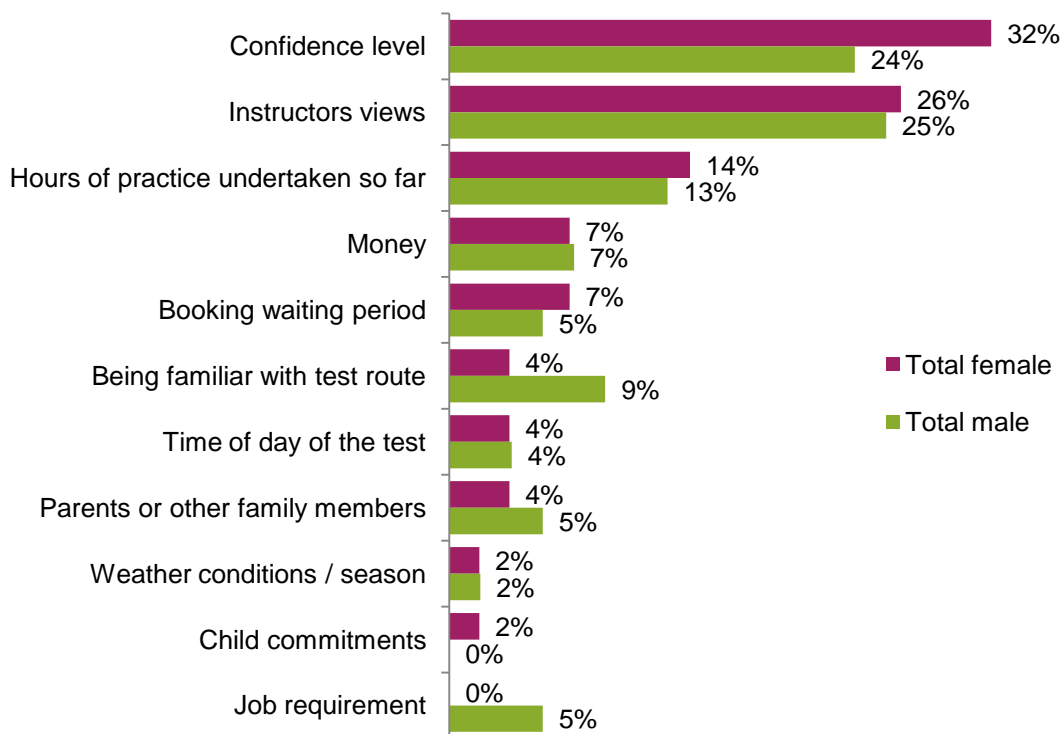
*“Confidence level because you need to be confident with your own driving before you take the test.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

Additionally, a larger number of females (32%) believed confidence levels would influence their decision to book their practical test compared with males (24%).

*“I choose confidence because I think whether you pass your test or not is about how confident you are, a simple thing like nerves can cost you the whole test.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

On the other hand, a higher proportion of males suggested that being familiar with the test route (9%) and job requirements (5%) would influence their decision to book their practical test compared with females (4% and 0% respectively).

**Figure 6: Factors influencing individuals to book their practical test by gender**



Sample base: 57 responses from females, 55 responses from males

Additionally, a similar proportion of males (5%) and females (7%) suggested they would be influenced by the booking waiting period. Very few participants made reference to uncertainty regarding the waiting times as they had not yet reached the decision to book their practical test; however, some (mainly those who had previously failed their test)

acknowledged that the waiting times can be longer depending on the test centre, therefore they would be influenced to book earlier than envisaged.

In line with the findings for readiness to book their test, many valued their instructor's views as they felt they were most aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They also mentioned their instructor's experience and knowledge of driving made them feel more confident in their skills as a learner.

*"My instructor's opinion means the most I would say, even if I felt confident but he didn't, I wouldn't book the test yet." (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, Other region)*

*"Views of the instructor because they have been with me from the start of my lessons and I trust them to know when I am ready." (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East of England)*

Hours of practise undertaken so far was deemed important to determine individuals' level of readiness. Participants suggested they did not want to rush their test and felt the hours of practise was a good indicator of how well they were developing their skills.

*"The hours of practise is important because the more hours you do the better you should be at driving." (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

### **5.2.2 Additional influential factors**

As well as the prompted list, participants were asked about any other factors they felt were missing from the list provided which may influence them to book their driving test. A few suggestions were made including the time of year and test centre location.

Participants mentioned time of year for different reasons. Most of those aged 17 to 24 believed the time of year was important as they did not want to book their practical test during exam period. Older participants (those aged 25+) mentioned work and childcare commitments as being an influence as their test date would be influenced by their availability.

*"The time of year is important; I don't want to book a test right in the middle of my exams." (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

Test centre locations were key for some participants in influencing their decision to book their practical test, particularly those living in rural locations as there were few test centre locations in their areas. Some participants living in London reported that their test centre locations were quite a distance away so they would be influenced by when there was availability at a closer test centre.

A few participants also reported that the location of the test centre was important as there were multiple test centres in their area and there was a perception that some were harder to pass in than others. This sparked conversation amongst other participants who agreed and stated that they have heard the same from other learners.

*"I live near to three test centres some of which from what I hear are harder than others so I would feel less ready if I was going to be taking a test in a busier area than if I was taking it in a small town." (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

### 5.3 Barriers to additional practise before booking a practical test

Most participants believed that time and money were the main barriers to having more practise before their practical test. There was a perception amongst most that driving lessons are too expensive.

*“It costs a fortune and if your haven't got unlimited access to a big pot of money you have to save up” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

*“I am a student so money is an issue for me too and fitting it around my timetable and society commitments.” (Female participant aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

As most participants, particularly those aged 17 to 24 were at university or working, they found that other commitments (such as coursework and exam period) made it difficult to book regular driving lessons.

Some also mentioned the instructor's availability could be a barrier, particularly if they were looking to book more frequent lessons. This finding was mainly found amongst those who had driving lessons with national driving schools.

### 5.4 Factors influencing individuals to reschedule their practical test

Learner and novice drivers were asked what factors they thought would influence whether they decided to reschedule their test. Overall most did not tend to think about the possibility of rescheduling their test, so found this difficult to answer. However, in line with the findings throughout the report, the key factor that would possibly make them reschedule was their level of confidence. Other factors have been shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Factors influencing learner and novice drivers to reschedule their practical test**



Participants believed they may reschedule their test depending on how confident and ready they felt as they got closer to their test date. Females were more likely to suggest this, particularly those who had fewer hours of driving lessons and were less confident in their skills as a driver.

Weather conditions were a common factor mentioned across each of the discussion groups. Participants did not want to take their test in bad weather conditions as this would knock their level of confidence.

The time of the day of the test was also important to most as they did not want to be taking their test during peak times. There was a perception amongst some groups, particularly with younger participants (aged 17 to 24) that there is a higher fail rate for taking driving tests at certain times of the day. As well as this, one participant mentioned they had been told that examiners had a set pass or fail rate each day.



*“I’ve been told that they have to fail a certain number of people, and if they pass too many people in the morning they’ll fail loads in the afternoon.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, North East England).*

In addition to this, one participant mentioned if they took their test during peak rush hour they would not be able to demonstrate their driving skills and feared they could be failed on this; therefore they believed they would be more likely to book their driving test during non-peak hours.

*“If you get stuck in traffic and the examiner does not see you drive enough in the slotted time they will fail you and this is the quietest period, as well as they have to fail a certain amount of people in the day so during these times it is easier to pass.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

Finally, some participants mentioned their personal availability may influence them to reschedule their test, particularly if something urgent came up or they had other personal commitments.

## 5.5 Factors influencing individuals to ensure they are a safe driver

In order to identify if participants were aware of safety after passing their test, they were asked to inform what factors they believed would ensure they are a safe driver or help reduce the likelihood of collisions once they had passed. A wide range of responses were provided which have been summarised below.

**Ability to recognise mistakes and improving on them in their lessons** – Participants believed that it was important for them to know in which areas of their driving they lacked a good level of skill so they were clear on which areas they needed to improve.

**Awareness of road signs and sticking to the recommended speed limits** – Most participants mentioned this was important to ensure they are a safe driver especially with regards to speed awareness. Some agreed that being aware of speed limits ensured they were more alert on the roads and could help reduce the risk of accidents.

*“By knowing and understanding the road signs, and speed awareness allows you to be more alert and aware of what to do.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

**Having patience on the road and being aware of other drivers** – This finding mainly emerged amongst female participants. They suggested that in order to be a safe driver and reduce the risk of collisions after they had passed their test they needed to be aware of other drivers and potential hazards on the roads.

*“Follow the road rules, do what you think is right rather than just copying others.” (Female participants, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

**Putting what they have learnt in their theory in to practise** – Some mentioned that recalling what they learnt in their theory test and putting these skills in to practise in their driving would make them a safer driver.

Along with these factors, participants recognised that **hours of practise** were key to ensuring they were a safe driver. They came to the conclusion that the more time they spent practising and developing their skills (i.e. awareness of hazards and sticking to speed limits) the more aware they would become of how to be safe on the roads after passing their test.

It was clear from the discussions that females gave more thought to what would make them a good driver compared to some of the males who focussed more on what was required for them to pass their driving test. Females related this to the hours of practise they had, suggesting the more they practised the more confident they were likely to feel about their driving ability.

*“More practise and maturity in driving will make me a safe and friendly driver.”  
(Female participant, aged 25+, South East England)*

*“Lots and lots of practise, until everything just comes naturally to you.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, Other region)*

Additionally, some older participants (those aged over 25) believed **taking pass plus** would ensure they were a safe driver and reduce the risk of collisions after they had passed their test. Some participants suggested that taking pass plus would allow them to build on their previous experience and increase their confidence in their driving ability.

*“I think taking pass plus, building experience driving in different areas and different environments and again having confidence in your own driving ability.” (Male participant, aged 25+, West Midlands)*

## 5.6 Views of those who have previously failed their test

This sub-section outlines the findings from those who had previously taken a driving test and failed. Please note, as these questions were only asked to one group in this research, findings are based on a small number of responses.

### 5.6.1 Perceptions of readiness prior to taking the practical test

Most participants were confident they would pass their test at the time of booking. They also agreed they felt ready at the time of taking their test and had enough practise.

Participants mentioned a number of factors that they believe demonstrated they were ready at the time of taking their test which included their knowledge of the test route, the ability to do different manoeuvres without assistance and their confidence in their skills to drive independently. These factors were very similar to those that participants suggested would influence their decision to book their practical test; therefore, it can be surmised that these are common factors that individuals think about during their decision making process.

One participant who had previously failed their driving test but recently passed suggested they chose a test centre where they were familiar with the routes to increase their chances of passing.

*“I was choosing the test centre with familiar routes so that I could increase my own chances of passing.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, London)*

Some participants believed that their reason for failing was based on a small mistake which they were confident they would not make again. One participant voiced they had previously failed their test three times before passing and indicated each time was for a different reason. They suggested their reasons for failing came down to the hours of practise they had previously undertaken, their confidence level and the examiner.

*“I have failed 3 and passed from 4th attempt. 1st time I failed was because I have taken the driving test after taking only 12 hours of lessons. 2nd fail was due to the mistake in 38th minute of driving (probably thought that I already passed), 3rd time*

*the instructor was very aggressive with me - asked to stop on zigzag, when I said I won't do that they just shouted at me.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, London)*

As these participants had experience of previously failing their driving test, they were asked how helpful it would have been to have given them longer to practise. Overall, most agreed they did not feel they necessarily needed more practise as their reasons for failing came down to their actions on the day. Although for some, it would have been useful to be more aware of the test route to avoid making minor mistakes.

*“I don't think more practise would have helped because I failed on one silly mistake.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

### **5.6.2 Advice for learners thinking about booking their test**

Participants mentioned a number of factors that they would advise learner drivers to take into account before booking their practical test. These can be summarised as:

- Ensure individuals feel ready and confident.
- Take as many lessons as possible and do not rush to pass.
- Be aware of the test route or area they are driving.
- Some advised to book a date in advance as waiting times are long and use the time to practise as much as possible.

Participants advised that individuals need to ensure they are confident and feel ready at the time of booking their practical test for similar reasons outlined throughout this report (i.e. to ensure they are calm and ready on the day of taking the test).

*“Book a date in advance so you don't procrastinate.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, London)*

It was also advised that learner drivers take as many lessons as possible and do not try to rush to pass their test. The main reason for this was due to the hours of practise being perceived as important to reduce the risk of failing. Some also mentioned this would make them a safer driver.

*“Make sure that they are actually ready for it - no rush.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, London)*

*“I had all the key skills before I took my test but you can always do with more practise.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South West England)*

Being familiar with the test route or at least the area they are driving in for the practical test was recommended by most participants as they felt this makes individuals more comfortable and confident at the time of taking the test. A few also mentioned that it was also important to feel confident about driving in areas they were not familiar with as this reflected the reality of driving.

A few participants advised that learners should book the practical test date in advance, as they recognised there could be long waiting times. Some also suggested using the time period leading up to the practical test to ensure they are getting as much practise as possible.

*“Booking a date is usually a good idea as you have a goal in mind.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

It was also recommended that a checklist approach could be used whereby individuals have a list of areas they could check against before booking their practical test. Other participants also agreed with this approach and suggested this is something that could be signposted from the gov.uk website at the time of booking or used by the learner’s driving instructor before booking.

In addition to the checklist approach, some participants also advocated the idea of carrying out a ‘mock test’ with their instructor prior to booking their practical test to give them an idea of what driving independently would be like. Some mentioned it would be beneficial to conduct this with a different driving instructor or family/friend so they have experience of taking instructions and driving independently with someone they did not necessarily know. It was perceived by a few participants that this would also give learners the opportunity to practise driving under pressure.

*“I think a mock test is really helpful as it gives you the experience of driving under some pressure” (Male participant, aged 25+, North West England)*

### 5.6.3 Similarities and differences between those who had previously failed their test and learner drivers

The key difference between those who had previously failed their test and learner drivers was the level of awareness of safety and familiarity of what would be required of them to pass. Figure 8 outlines additional differences.

**Figure 8: Differences between learner drivers and those who previously failed their test**

Those who have previously failed their test	Learner drivers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Less reliant on instructor views after failing as recognise which areas they need to improve.</li> <li>•Familiarity of the driving test experience e.g. trying to remain calm under pressure, awareness of others on the road, being familiar with the test route.</li> <li>•Cost of lessons was more of a concern due to the additional number of lessons required after failing.</li> <li>•Demonstrated a good understanding of ensuring they had enough practise before booking their driving test and advocated this to learner drivers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•More reliant on instructor views to influence them to book their test.</li> <li>•Developing and improving skills as a driver to pass their test was at the forefront of most learners minds.</li> <li>•Although some mentioned the importance of safety, most views were about level of confidence.</li> </ul>

## 6 Testing the proposed interventions

Participants were presented with various communications relating to the online booking system where their views and opinions were explored. The three different communications tested were:

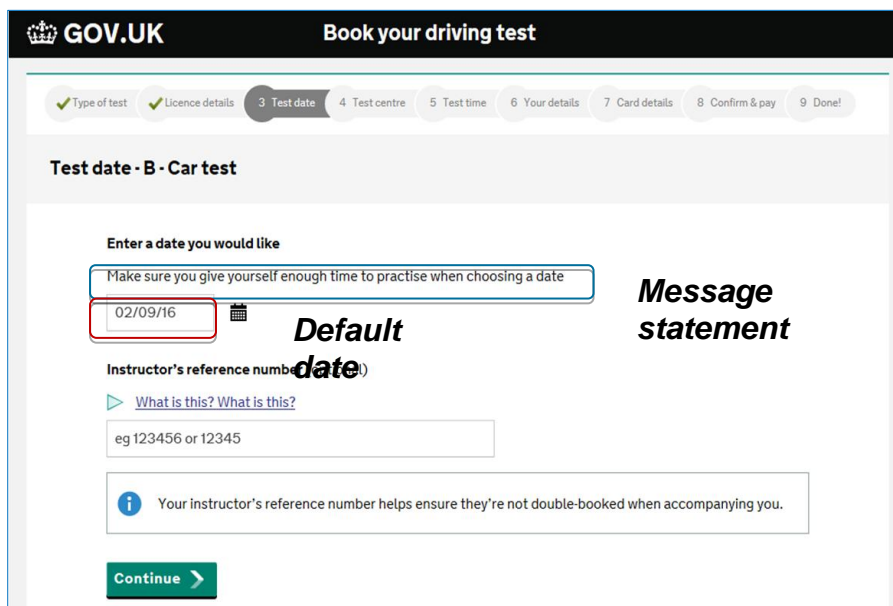
1. A default date on the online booking system
2. Message statements which would appear where the learner would select a date to book their test
3. An email communication which would be sent to individuals after they have booked their practical test but before the test takes place

This section of the report outlines participants' views and perceptions of the different interventions as well as suggested areas for improvement.

### 6.1 Views on the default date

Participants were shown a video example of someone going through the different steps to book their practical test and were asked to comment on the default date and position of the message statement. A screenshot taken from the video that was shown to participants is shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Screenshot of the default date on the online booking system**



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK 'Book your driving test' interface. At the top, there is a progress bar with steps: 1. Type of test, 2. Licence details, 3. Test date (highlighted), 4. Test centre, 5. Test time, 6. Your details, 7. Card details, 8. Confirm & pay, 9. Done!. Below the progress bar, the page title is 'Test date - B - Car test'. The main content area has a heading 'Enter a date you would like' and a text box containing '02/09/16'. A red box highlights the date. To the right of the date, the text 'Message statement' is written in a large, bold font. Below the date, there is a section for 'Instructor's reference number' with a link 'What is this? What is this?' and a text box containing 'eg 123456 or 12345'. At the bottom, there is a 'Continue' button with a right-pointing arrow.

#### 6.1.1 Views on the default date

Overall there were mixed views amongst participants on the default date being pre-selected to 16 weeks ahead from the time of booking; some suggested this is too far ahead whilst others believed it to be about right.

Males were more likely to mention the default date was too far ahead and suggested their reason for booking would be because they felt ready to take their test; therefore they would

be looking to book the earliest available date. These participants were also more likely to scroll back to find a sooner date.

*“I am confident that by that point I will have enough experience of driving to take the test.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

*“It’s almost 4 months away, if I’m nearly ready now I don’t want to wait 4 months.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

Some females also mentioned the default date was too far ahead; their reasons for this were linked to their level of confidence and the default date potentially deterring them from booking. At this point they were not clear that they were able to scroll back to change the date and when informed their view remained the same. They expressed that having an initial date that far ahead may imply they were not ready to take their test. Therefore similar to the findings from male participants, some females mentioned they would rather not pre-book that far in advance.

*“I rather not pre-book because I will like to book when I am fully ready and then practise further if I get longer date for test.” (Female participant, aged 25+, South East England)*

Those who stated a 16 week date is about right mentioned they would use the time in between to practise more and suggested the default date would give them a specific timeframe to work towards. Some participants also believed the default date was useful as it was likely to make them more determined and focussed as they perceived it as being a goal to work towards.

*“Because it seems a little while away which gives me ample time to finish off learning.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

Older participants (those aged over 25) were more accepting of the 16 week default date and thought it was a good idea compared to younger participants (those aged 17 to 24). Some believed that they would use the time to prepare for the date given and that it would make them take that time more seriously and therefore practise more for their test.

### **6.1.2 Views on the position of the simple message statement**

Additionally, most participants also felt the position of the simple message statement above the default date worked well. They stated it was situated in a good place on the web page to make people read it before selecting their practical test date. A few participants suggested it may be useful to make the statement bold or highlight specific words such as ‘recommended’, ‘time’ and ‘practise’ (examples provided for intervention 2: default + simple message) to make it stand out on the web page.

## **6.2 Message statements**

The research tested participants’ views on three sets of interventions, each with three to four message variations. A copy of each of the message statements explored can be found in Appendix B of this report.

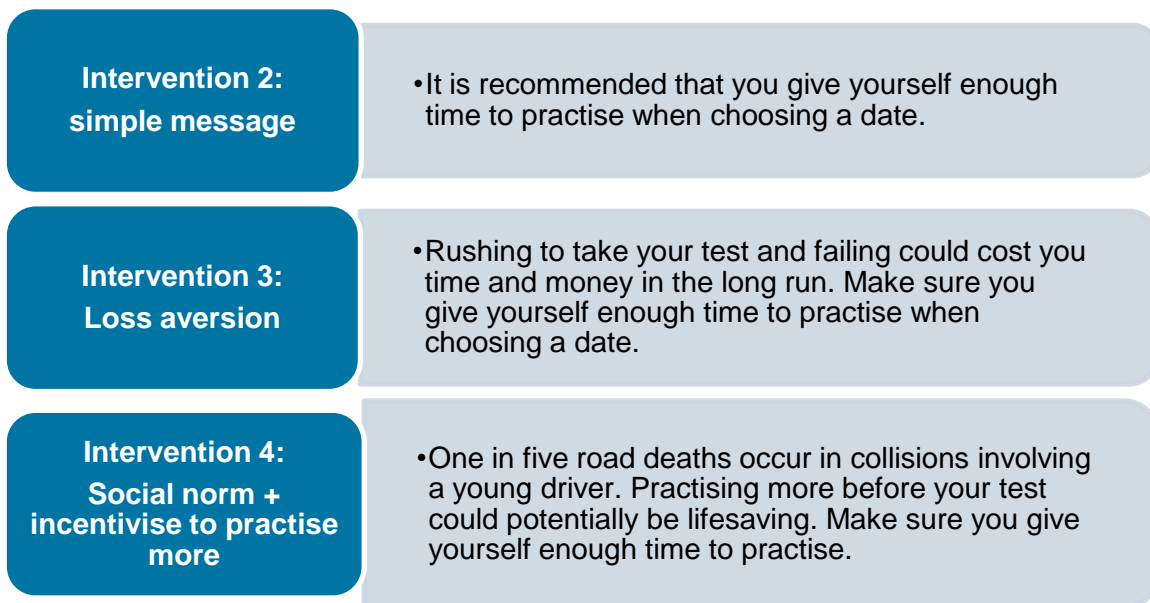
The message statements were categorised as intervention 2: simple message, intervention 3: loss aversion and intervention 4: social norm + incentive to practise more.

- Intervention 2 aimed to bring people’s awareness to the date they selected, linking this date to practise. The message statement is hoped to have the effect of priming people to think about pre-test practise and encouraging them to think about the date to book their test.
- Intervention 3 was focussed around loss aversion with the aim to highlight potential adverse outcomes that may impact individuals if they rush to take their test (e.g. outlining the number of drivers failing their practical test or including the cost of more time and money). The purpose of this intervention was to encourage learners to think about the consequences of booking their driving test when they are not ready. It is also hypothesised that the statements around loss aversion should have the effect of giving learner drivers the sense that they can control the outcome if they give themselves enough time to prepare.
- Intervention 4 highlighted social norms followed by behaviours to incentivise individuals to practise more. The social norm in the statements was associated around safe drivers having more practise before taking their test. The aim of these message statements was that the social norm gives a sense of control over the adverse outcome and encourage learners to give themselves more time to practise (e.g. if I practise more I will be safer).

### 6.2.1 Views on the message statements

During the online focus groups, participants were shown two of the interventions which included either three or four message statements and were asked to rate which they most and least preferred. The purpose of showing these message statements was to explore how influential they would be to get individuals to practise more and which parts of the message statements were perceived to be most influential. The most frequently preferred message statements for each of the interventions are shown in Figure 10:

**Figure 10: Preferred message statements across the three different interventions**



## 6.2.2 Intervention 2: Simple message

### 6.2.2.1 Initial views of message statements

There were mixed views across each of the groups regarding the message statements in intervention two. A few participants felt the statements came across as being too formal and disliked the word ‘recommended’. For most participants, these statements were perceived positively and individuals felt it was clear that the message was trying to better prepare learners for their driving test.

*“My view is that they are trying to make it clear that you should prepare yourself and make sure you are confident because otherwise you could be wasting a lot of money if you aren’t fully prepared.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

Most were also positive about the simple message statements as they felt they were informative and had some influence on individuals’ thinking about how ready they are before they then go on to select a date to book their test.

*“I think that is a good idea and the warning text does make you think.” (Male participant, aged 25+, South West England)*

*“It would make me think twice before booking a soonish date.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, North East England)*

A few participants also had reservations about whether a message statement was required at all. There was a perception that the message statement may put people off booking their test, particularly amongst females, as some believed some of the words used could affect their confidence.

*“I think the warning text was a bit negative. if you are not up to the standards then you won’t pass, don’t feel as though the warning text was needed to be fair.” (Female participant, aged 25+, London)*

In summary, although some participants felt the default date was too far ahead, they did agree that the simple message statement would make people think twice about booking their test so in conjunction, the default date and the simple message statement would work well. There would be a risk of individuals not thinking about delaying their test at the time of booking and result in them scrolling back to find a sooner date if the default date alone were used. Participants believed the simple message statements would be more influential in encouraging them to think about delaying their driving test, therefore most suggested they should be used in conjunction with the default date.

A summary of the findings on each of the statements in intervention 2: simple message is outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3: Participant perceptions of intervention 2**

Intervention 2: Simple message	Participant perceptions
<b>1. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A few suggested this statement motivated them to get themselves ready for their test</li> <li>✗ Came across as telling and dictating what learners should be doing</li> <li>✗ Sounded too formal</li> </ul>



**2. It is recommended that you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.**

- ✓ Positive about the tone suggesting that the DfT is looking out for their safety
- ✓ Tone of statement was more encouraging
- ✓ Did not sound forceful or dictating
- ✓ Preferred the length of the statement
- ✓ Suggested this statement caught their eye immediately
- ✗ A few disliked the use of the word recommended

**3. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise and get yourself ready when choosing a date.**

- ✓ Encouraged them to practise
- ✓ Some liked that this statement was trying to prepare them for their test and ensured they were confident
- ✗ Considered to be too long winded

### 6.2.2.2 Preferred message statement

Participants were asked to select which of the statements they most and least preferred. The most frequently preferred message statement was option 2.

***It is recommended that you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.***

Females were more likely to prefer this statement compared with males and suggested it encouraged them to think about practising more. They particularly liked that the wording of the statement came across as advising rather than dictating that they should give themselves time to practise before choosing a date. A few males suggested this statement stated the obvious and it came across as more telling.

*“I like this statement best because it makes me feel more motivated than the rest to get myself ready for test.” (Female participant, aged 25+, South East England)*

Some males preferred statement 3 of intervention 2 as they felt the tone and wording of the statement better advised and encouraged them to practise more.

Those aged over 25 liked that statement 2 was short and precise and suggested too much information could be ignored or people could lose concentration.

Most participants liked the use of the word ‘recommended’ as it made them take notice. Some also mentioned that it was a useful word as people are more likely to follow recommendations as it sounds encouraging and reflects the importance of safety.

A few suggested the word ‘recommended’ came across as sounding forceful so advised to use ‘suggested’ or ‘encouraged’ as alternatives. This finding emerged mainly amongst female participants.

*“The statement I hate a lot, it's so formal and sterile and I'm never going to follow recommendations.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

### 6.2.2.3 Level of influence of message statement

Most participants suggested the message statement had some impact on influencing individuals to think about delaying their test. They thought the length of the statement was appropriate and liked that it encouraged them to think about how much time they were giving themselves to prepare for their practical test.

However, when comparing this type of statement to the other interventions, it was not as influential as it lacked facts and statistics so may not have the desired effect on all.

### 6.2.3 Intervention 3: Loss aversion

#### 6.2.3.1 Initial views of message statements

There were mixed views on the message statements in intervention 3 about loss aversion amongst participants; some suggested the wording of the statements was off-putting and they would be discouraged from booking their test even if they felt ready based on their confidence or views of their instructor. Whilst others were interested by the facts provided for example, the number of young learners who failed and the monetary value of the test, as they felt these made people think about the cost implications of booking a test if they failed.

*“Outlines the average cost of failing and also gives a certain figure (more than half fail).” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

A summary of the views and perceptions of each of the statements in intervention 3 have been outlined in Table 4.

**Table 4: Participant perceptions of intervention 3**

Intervention 3: Loss aversion	Participant perceptions
1. Just over half of learner drivers fail their test. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Liked the use of facts and statistics</li> <li>✗ Disliked the use of ‘over half of learners fail their test’ as suggested incidences on the day can occur that they cannot prepare for and result to failure</li> <li>✗ Tone came across as being negative</li> </ul>
2. Just over half of learner drivers fail their practical test. You’re more likely to fail if you haven’t practised enough. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Liked the use of facts and statistics</li> <li>✗ Length of statement considered too long resulting in fewer people reading</li> <li>✗ Although beneficial to know, some described this as patronising</li> <li>✗ Suggested the second half of the statement was not required as the first half clearly emphasised the need to practise more.</li> </ul>
3. Rushing to take your test and failing could cost you time and money in the long run. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Preferred the tone of this message as it sounds advising</li> <li>✓ Suggested this outlined the consequences of rushing a test in a more reader friendly way</li> <li>✓ More likely to encourage them to think about practising more</li> <li>✓ Made people think about how confident they are</li> <li>✗ Some suggested the lack of facts could inspire fear implying most are likely to fail.</li> <li>✗ Some suggested wording was too long</li> </ul>
4. Just over half of learner drivers fail their practical test. On average, each test costs over £100 (test fee and car hire). Make sure you give	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Most liked the use of the cost of the test</li> <li>✗ Length of statement considered to be too long</li> </ul>

yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.

### 6.2.3.2 Preferred message statement

Overall, most participants preferred option 3.

***Rushing to take your test and failing could cost you time and money in the long run. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.***

Most participants preferred statement 3 due to the mention of time and money implications if they failed their test and felt this would make individuals think about how much they have practised. As outlined in previous sections of this report, time and money are both considered to be a barrier in getting enough practise before participants booked their driving test; therefore this statement re-stated the importance of that to learners.

*“I think facts could give you an idea of how much it could affect you and time and money are valuable!” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

*“It's clear and to the point and it sounds like helpful advice/encouragement.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

*“It makes you stop and think rather than just tell you that you might fail.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, Other region)*

Some mentioned the statement also raised awareness about the fact that a driving test should only be booked when you feel confident about passing and emphasised the importance of having enough practise.

*“It's telling you what could happen if you book your test but you haven't practised, you could fail so it gives you the awareness that you should only really book our test if you are fully confident.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, North East England)*

Further to this, both males and females liked the use of the estimated cost of the driving tests in statement 4 and suggested this should be incorporated into the shorter and preferred statement 3. This links to the perception that the cost of driving lessons is too high, therefore informing or reminding them of the cost of the driving test would have more of an influence in thinking about how ready they are to book their practical.

*“The money in statement 3 really hits home.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, West midlands)*

*“It doesn't need to be there just the mention of money will get people thinking.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North East England)*

Some females suggested the wording of statement 3 in intervention 3 was too long and would lose the reader's attention.

*“I like the price reminder but it should be shorter.” (Female, aged 17 to 24, North East England)*

**6.2.3.3 Level of influence of message statement**

Learner and novice drivers generally suggested this statement had an influence on them thinking about how ready they were to book their driving test. Participants mostly preferred the use of time and money in this statement and suggested including the monetary value of failing the practical test had the biggest impact.

However, some participants suggested the statement would not have as much of an impact as their time of booking would reflect their level of readiness. They would still read the message statements and agreed they make individuals pause and think but if they were confident to go on to the online booking system to book, they would proceed with selecting a date.

In order for this statement to have the desired effect on learners it was suggested that the price of the test i.e. £100 was incorporated into this statement. Most participants, particularly males, suggested the reminder of the price encourages them to think about how ready they are for their test so incorporating it in to the statement would be more influential.

**6.2.4 Intervention 4: Social norm + incentive to practise more**

**6.2.4.1 Initial views of message statements**

When presented with the message statements for intervention 4 around social norm and the incentive to practise more, most described them as ‘scary’, ‘hard-hitting’ and ‘fearsome’; however, many suggested that these were the most influential statements to make individuals think about not only their level of confidence but whether they have had enough practise before booking their test. Females were more likely to describe the statements were scary. This finding was found amongst those who suggested they have had fewer hours of driving lessons and were less confident in their abilities as a driver.

Additionally, participants again advocated the use of facts and statistics in each of the message statements, suggesting these demonstrated the importance of being a responsible driver.

*“I agree with the statements it’s very important to be prepared before driving before you make any life changing mistakes.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

A summary of the views and perceptions of each of the statements in intervention 4 have been outlined in Table 5.

**Table 5: Participant perceptions of intervention 3**

Intervention 4: Social norm + incentive to practise more	Participant perceptions
1. One in five road deaths occur in collisions involving a young driver. Practising more before your test could potentially be lifesaving. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Most likely to influence individuals to book a later date</li> <li>✓ Made individuals think about the consequences of not practising enough for their test</li> <li>✓ Came across as more informative</li> <li>✓ Preferred the tone of this statement</li> <li>✗ Disliked the use of road death, preferred the use of accidents in statement two</li> <li>✗ Older participants disliked the use of ‘young drivers’</li> </ul>
2. One in five new drivers are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Older participants preferred the use of ‘new drivers’ as</li> </ul>

likely to have an accident in the first six months after passing their test. Practising more before your test will make the roads safer for everyone. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ it better targets the intended audience</li> <li>✗ Statement too long winded and could lose individuals attention</li> </ul>
3. Every day 5 people in the UK die on the roads. Practising more before your test could potentially be lifesaving. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Some suggested this statement was clear and showed the importance of safe driving more</li> <li>✓ Demonstrated the reality of lack of experience and importance of being a good driver.</li> <li>✗ May put people off booking their test altogether, particularly those who were anxious or less confident about their skills as a driver</li> </ul>

#### 6.2.4.2 Preferred message statement

Whilst participants advocated the use of facts in each of the statements, the most frequently preferred statement was statement 1.

***One in five road deaths occur in collisions involving a young driver. Practising more before your test could potentially be lifesaving. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise.***

Participants suggested this statement was most influential in making individuals think about how ready they are to book their test. Most liked the facts used in the statement and suggested this effectively demonstrated the importance of being ready to take a practical test. Some also mentioned that this statement reminded them of ensuring they are a safe driver.

Additionally, although the statement initially came across as ‘hard hitting’, older participants (those aged 25+) felt that the statement reflected the reality of the implications of not being ready at the time of taking a test.

*“Its stuff you need to think about when thinking about learning to drive.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, East Midlands)*

*“The realisation that your actions could have serious consequences.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

Males were more likely to select this statement and suggested the statistics created an incentive for them to make sure they had practised enough. Females were more likely to describe this statement as ‘scary’ and feared it would have the opposite effect and deter learners from taking their test altogether or knock their confidence.

*“Yes the statistics are quite frightening, makes me feel that although I may feel confident to take test and relatively safe driver, the chances of an accident are quite high.” (Female participant, aged 25+, London)*

Those aged over 25 also felt this statement was influential in making them think about the safety of other passengers. They also suggested using the phrase ‘less experienced’ rather than ‘young driver’ since learning to drive can be undertaken at any age.

*“I like 1 as it is not targeting a particular type of driver. I don't like 2 as it is targeting specifically young drivers.” (Female participant, aged 25+, West Midlands)*

#### **6.2.4.3 Level of influence of message statement**

Most participants agreed statement 1 in intervention 4 would influence them to think about how ready they are to book their test. Some suggested the statement would make them practise more until they felt confident to take on the challenge of completing their driving test and others stated it made them think about practising more but with more focus and concentration.

Many participants across the different groups also advocated the use of the facts and statistics in the messages about the number of deaths in statement 3 and believed that this had the biggest impact as it reflects the importance of safety. However, some advised the statement would be more influential if the DfT incorporated facts on crash rates as an alternative. Although statement 2 in intervention 4 did include information about the number of collisions and accidents amongst young and new drivers, participants preferred the tone of statement 1.

Additionally, although some participants acknowledged the importance of safety as a driver, many were surprised about the statistics provided on the number of crashes and accidents caused by young people and novice drivers. One participant who had previously failed their test also mentioned that, had they seen this message statement before booking their practical test first time, they would have been more likely to think about how confident they were and whether they felt they had enough practise.

Overall, this intervention was the most influential in evaluating individuals’ level of readiness and delaying their practical test.

### **6.3 Additional hours of practise**

Having been presented with the pre-selected dates and message statements participants were asked which would make them more likely to do more hours of practical learning. In line with the previous findings, most agreed the message statements would have more of an influence on them having more practise. This is due to the fact the statements drew their attention and evoked a thought process about their level of readiness to book the practical test.

*“If I saw them statements just before booking my test, I'd want to wait longer until I feel more confident.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, North East England)*

*“I would prefer the messages with details as they are more influential.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, London)*

*“The pre-selected date I could just easily ignore once I've clicked the box and looked at the calendar, but you really pay attention to the message when you read it.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, Other region)*

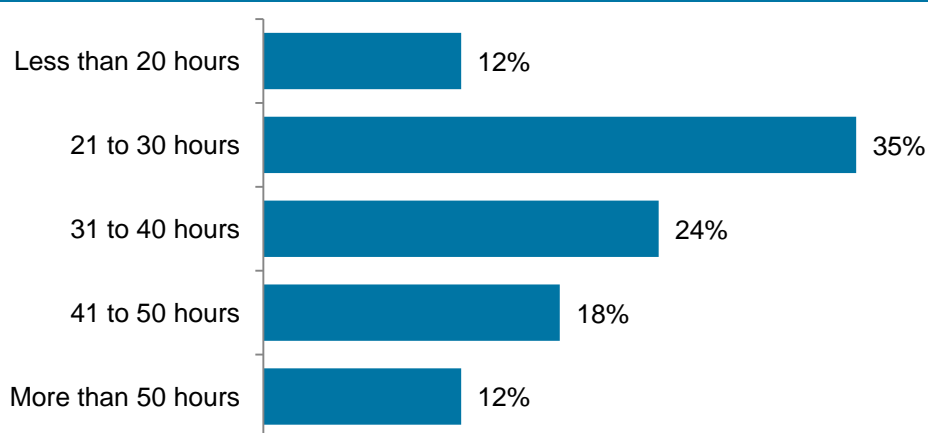
Some mentioned both the message statements and the pre-selected dates were necessary, whilst a few suggested just the pre-selected dates would be more influential as the

timeframe would indicate how much additional practise they are able to have before their test.

*“The statement provides a wakeup call to what could happen to you if you don't prepare and the date makes you think about how prepared you are.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

Participants were also asked how many hours of practise they would expect to have before booking their driving test and how they would spread these overtime. The responses were very mixed ranging from 5 to more than 50 hours of practise; however, most agreed they would spread these by having more lessons in the same period of time. A breakdown of the responses is shown in figure 8 where around six in ten suggested they would have between 21 to 40 hours (59%) of lessons before booking their driving test.

**Figure 8: Expected number of hours before booking a driving test**



Sample base: 34 participants (Low base size)

A few mentioned the number of additional hours would depend on how soon their practical test was and that they would try and get as much practise in that time period.

*“Probably 5-10 just to ensure that I have all the skills and to ensure there are no weak areas. Also to polish off and improve any weak areas found.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

## 6.4 Views on the email communication

Participants were shown an email communication (a copy can be found in Appendix B) and asked about their views on its content and of the email subject. Participants were informed this email would be sent to individuals after booking their test but before their practical test date.

### 6.4.1 Views on the content of the email communication

Most participants liked the idea of receiving an email and found the content beneficial. In particular they liked that the email reassured them that they could rebook without losing their fee. One participant was particularly positive about the email and mentioned they would be more likely to re-book as it would remind them they still have the opportunity to do this without losing their fee.

*“I think it is amazing because how many people might regret booking their test so early, feel they're not ready but do it anyway in fear of losing money? I didn't know*

*you could reschedule without losing the fee, personally.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, Other region)*

Some participants liked the content and found the tone of the email was clear, friendly and used simple information. Some also described it as being professional and mentioned that the point about ensuring learners are ready to take their test came across well.

*“This is a really good, informative email which provides you with everything that you need.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

A few participants recommended the tone of the email needed to be more positive and suggested it could be personalised more by including a ‘good luck’ message before the email signature.

Participants made reference to the message statements that were incorporated into the email and referred to the statistics. They suggested the statistics were important to make people think about how ready they were about taking their driving test and to influence them to reschedule.

*“It’s a good message as it really makes you think and question yourself about whether you’re ready so that you don’t have to continuously redo it.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*

One participant suggested they preferred this method of communication compared with the message statements as it felt more personal to them and gave them the perception that the DfT care about whether young learners pass their driving test or not.

However, there were a few participants who disliked the email and felt it pressured them into rescheduling their date.

*“It’s very biased to rescheduling so I’d feel rather pressured into moving it.” (Female participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

#### **6.4.2 Views on the email subject**

There were mixed views on the email subject across the discussion groups. Most suggested the email subject was inviting and felt personal to them; although some felt the email subject came across as slightly patronising.

Those who described the email subject as patronising were generally female and suggested they felt as though the tone of the email subject came across as implying they would fail. Some also mentioned the tone came across as imposing and it sounded like a warning which would put them off their test regardless of whether they were confident or informed by their instructor that they were ready for their practical. One also suggested the wording of the email subject made the email look more like a newsletter or a promotional email rather than a personalised reminder.

However, most of those who were positive about the email subject mentioned the tone was friendly and inviting and would encourage them to open the email. They also suggested the email subject generally sounded professional.

*“It gets straight to the point, I like it.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, North East England)*

*“Yeah the message seems friendly and I like it.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, West Midlands)*



Although the email subject was well received amongst most participants some did make recommendations on improving it and provided the following suggestions for rewording the subject.

- “Important information about your upcoming driving test”
- “A reminder of your driving test on...”

It was suggested that the use of the word ‘important’ or ‘reminder’ may make learners more inclined to open the email.

### **6.4.3 Perceived level of influence of the email communication**

Overall most participants suggested the email communication was influential in making someone think about rebooking their test. They agreed that the email would make them think twice about how ready they were to take their test and they were positive about the ability to reschedule without a fee.

Some participants, particularly males, were not as positive about the email and did not perceive it as being as influential. They believed their state of readiness to take the test came down to their confidence level.

Participants were asked when they thought the most effective time may be to send the email to learners. A range of responses were provided with most suggesting between two to four weeks before the test. Some suggested the email could be sent straight after learners had booked the test; however, there was debate around the email not having the same impact. Some felt individuals may be at risk of forgetting depending how far advance their test date was.

When exploring the timeframe in more detail, some suggested four weeks may be too far ahead and individuals may not know if they are ready by then. Thus, most suggested receiving the email two weeks before the test was appropriate as this gave them enough time to evaluate their level of readiness and rebook, if necessary, without a fee.

*“It needs to be close so they know how they feel.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, South East England)*

*“They might forget about it, and it isn’t close enough for them to decide how ready they are.” (Male participant, aged 17 to 24, Other region)*

### **6.4.4 Improvements to the email communication**

Further to this, participants were asked if there were any improvements or alternative messages they would suggest that may influence learners to practise more and delay their test until they were ready. Most were satisfied with the content of the email communication; however, some suggestions for improvements included:

- Specific statistics on pass/fail rates.
- Statistics about accidents associated with young learners.
- Signposting or including a link to a checklist.

Participants advocated the idea of having facts and statistics in the email communication to make them think about how ready they are to take their test. Some referred back to the message statements about the statistics on the number of road deaths and collisions and

suggested these were included. Others mentioned their attention would be drawn to statistics on the number of pass and fail rates amongst young learners.

Additionally, one participant suggested signposting a link in the email to a checklist of information to help them assess how ready they were. This sparked conversation amongst other participants who agreed with this recommendation. They believed the checklist could include information or questions such as could they do all the manoeuvres, could they drive safely, how aware were they of other road users and whether they could recognise the different road signs.

*“I think a checklist would really help as it gives you an idea of where you are before you start to think about a test.” (Male participants, aged 17 to 24, North West England)*

#### 6.4.5 Suggestions following a debrief with the DfT

Following the analysis of the findings from the online focus groups, BMG Research met with the DfT to discuss participants' views and perceptions of the different communications explored and decide which interventions to take forward.

Following the findings from the research and after discussions with the DfT BMG Research suggested the following interventions (outlined in Table 6) with a description of the reasons for the changes.

**Table 6: Suggested interventions following debrief with the DfT**

Intervention	Revised intervention wording	Findings from the research
<b>Intervention 2: Default + simple message</b>	Just over half of learner drivers fail their practical test. We recommend you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.	Recommending to give learner drivers enough practise before choosing a date would not have the desired effect as a single statement therefore it was recommended to combine this message with statistics. Participants advocated the use of information on pass or fail rates therefore by including the statistic on how many people fail is more likely to influence individuals to delay booking their test until they are ready.
<b>Intervention 3: Default + loss aversion</b>	Each test on average costs over £100 (test fee and car hire). Failing could cost you time and money in the long run. We recommend you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.	Participants advocated the use of the cost associated with booking a test to make them think twice about how ready they are to take their practical. On reflection BMG Research advised to include 'in the long run' as learner drivers are already aware it is costing them time and money at the time of booking however do not generally think about the long term cost implication of failing therefore drawing their attention to this will help put it at the forefront of their mind during the booking process.

<p><b>Intervention 4: Default + statistics on collision rates + incentive to practise more</b></p>	<p>One in five new drivers has an accident within six months of passing their test. Practising more before your test could potentially be lifesaving. We recommend you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.</p>	<p>Participants mentioned statistics on the rate of accidents would have more of an impact in delaying them to book their test. Therefore, this was incorporated in to the beginning of the statement rather than the original information on the number of deaths associated with learner drivers.</p>
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## 7 Conclusions and considerations

### 7.1 Conclusions

#### 7.1.1 Overall experiences and views of driving

The research found that most learner and novice drivers were motivated to learn to drive to be more independent and to enable access to a wider range of job opportunities in the future (particularly amongst those who are in Higher Education). When provided with a prompted list of motivations, participants suggested convenience, practicality and socialising were their key motivations. Males were more likely to learn to drive for convenience compared with females. Participants generally valued the idea of having a driving licence and considered it to be evidence that they had achieved a certain standard of driving.

A professional driving instructor was the main method for learning to drive for most, although there were some participants who learnt with a driving instructor as well as their family/friends. Their selected method of learning worked well for most, particularly those who were using a dual method of learning as they were able to further develop the skills they learnt with their instructor with their family/friend. However, it was clear from the research that participants were likely to pay more attention to an instructor compared to someone they knew as they felt they were less likely to pick up bad habits and had the perception of being more focussed if they were being taught by professionals.

Overall there were mixed views on the hours of practise individuals should be having before they book their driving test. Some suggested around 20 hours while others estimated more than 50 hours; however, most agreed that 30 to 40 hours would be ideal. Very few participants referred to the suggested number of hours of practise on the gov.uk website demonstrating limited awareness of what is required. Due to the varied responses on the number of hours needed, this may be an area for consideration by DfT to more widely publish an estimated number of hours to encourage individuals to ensure they are getting enough practise before they book their test.

#### 7.1.2 Understanding learner and novice drivers views and perceptions on the practical test

Most learners who took part in this research had not booked their driving test and the small number that had were amongst those who had previously failed, therefore the awareness of the content and process of the online booking system was limited. The factors that would influence individuals to book their driving test included instructor views, ability to do manoeuvres without support, the awareness of the test route and their level of confidence as a driver. Participants were provided with a prompted list of factors that may influence them to book their driving test and asked to rate the top three. Confidence levels were rated as the most important factor to influence learners to book their practical test. When looking at confidence levels with hours of practise, it was clear from the findings that those who felt less confident in their skills (typically more females) as a driver estimated having more hours of practise compared with those who were more confident.

Although individuals were motivated to learn to drive and ensured they got enough practise to be a safe driver, most participants agreed that time and money were the main barriers to

achieving this. There was a perception amongst most, particularly those at college or university, that the cost of driving lessons was too high. These participants also mentioned that their practise time was more restricted during exam periods. Others also suggested that it could be difficult to arrange appointments with their instructor, particularly those who were having lessons with instructors from larger driving schools.

Confidence, weather conditions, time of day of the test and personal availability were the main factors that would influence individuals to reschedule their practical test when already booked. However, the thought of rescheduling a driving test was not something participants suggested they considered. Most implied they would only book if they felt ready and confidence was a key factor to inform their level of readiness.

Despite safety being an important factor to consider when learning to drive, not many participants reflected or referred to this during the research. Booking the driving test and passing was the key objective at the forefront of most learners' minds. However, when asked what factors they believed would ensure they were a safe driver or help reduce the likelihood of collisions, participants were able to give more thought to this and provided a range of responses. They believed that the ability to recognise mistakes and improve on them in their lessons, being aware of road signs and sticking to the recommended speed limits, having patience on the road and being aware of other drivers would be factors that they perceived to be important to ensure they were a safe driver. In addition to this, participants suggested that in order to ensure they were able to achieve all the factors outlined, the hours of practise were key to ensuring they were a safe driver, suggesting that more practise would result in being a more skilful driver. Some also acknowledged that more practise would ensure they developed the necessary skills to be a safe driver.

### **7.1.3 Views of those who have previously failed their test**

Overall, participants who had previously failed their driving test had a higher level of awareness of what is required to pass their driving test. They were slightly more confident in their abilities as a driver although this was more likely to be the case for male learners.

In terms of advising other learners, participants suggested, from their experience it was important to ensure individuals felt ready and confident before taking their test. They advised taking as many lessons as possible and having some awareness of the test route or area they are driving in. Some also advised booking a date in advance and using the time in between to get as much practise as possible. These suggestions were similar and in line with the factors that would influence individuals to book their test such as their level of confidence, their instructors views and the hours of practise they have had.

When comparing experiences of learner drivers with those who had previously failed their test it was apparent that learner drivers were more reliant on the views of the instructor to advise on their level of readiness to book their driving test. Additionally, first time learner drivers were more likely to focus on developing their skills to pass their test in comparison to those who previously failed and were more familiar with the driving test experience. Their focus instead was being aware of others on the road and trying to remain calm under pressure.

A key difference between the groups was that, although some first time learners mentioned the importance of safety, their focus was more about their level of confidence as a driver and those who had previously failed their test were more concerned about improving their skills to be a good and safe driver.

#### 7.1.4 Testing DfT's interventions

A key finding from presenting the various communications was that participants suggested the message statements and the email communication would have some influence on individuals delaying their driving test. A few of those who had previously failed believed they would have benefitted from seeing the message statements at the time of booking, suggesting that these communications would have the desired effect.

There were mixed views on the default date; some suggested a 16 week date was too far ahead and others mentioned it was just right. Males were more likely to suggest they would scroll back and select an earlier date. However, it is important to note that the default date alone would not have much of an impact on individuals delaying or rescheduling their test. This is mainly due to the fact that some felt the default date was too far ahead so were more likely to scroll back. Participants felt the message statement would need to be used in combination with the default date to have the desired effect of influencing learners to delay their test.

Initial views of each of the message statements were mixed amongst participants. Some felt that the messages would put people off booking their driving test altogether whilst others felt they were useful as they made individuals stop and think about how ready and confident they really are at the time of booking. Having presented each of the message statements across the six online focus groups, the most frequently preferred statement was: ***One in five road deaths occur in collisions involving a young driver. Practising more before your test could potentially be lifesaving. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise.***

Participants described this statement as the most influential in making individuals think about how ready they are to book their test and particularly advocated the impact of the facts and statistics used in achieving this. Additionally, they believed that this statement effectively demonstrated the importance of being ready to take a practical test and ensuring they are a safe driver.

The email communication was considered beneficial by most participants. They felt the content was informative, friendly and particularly liked the mention of their ability to reschedule their driving test, if required, without losing their fee. Overall most participants suggested the email communication would be influential in making someone think about rebooking their test. However, some males were a bit more sceptical and suggested their state of readiness would be mostly influenced by how confident they were, not necessarily the content in the email.

In terms of timeframe for sending this email communication, it was clear from the research that receiving the email 2 weeks prior to individuals driving test date would be the most effective.

#### 7.1.5 Areas for improvement

Overall, considering delaying or rescheduling a driving test is not at the forefront of most individuals' minds. Learner drivers are generally focussed on ensuring they develop the required skills and confidence to pass their driving test, with some, reflecting on the importance of being a safe driver. Having said that, after presenting the communications being tested it is clear that they are influential and made participants stop and think about

whether they would delay their driving test but there are some additional areas to consider in relation to trialling the messages, as suggested by participants.

- Ensure the message statements include statistics on pass/fail rates.
- Include statistics about accidents associated with novice drivers in the message statements and email communication.
- Use a checklist approach, signposted from the email communication or on the booking page with the default date to encourage learners to think about whether they have developed the skills required to be a safe driver.

## 7.2 Further suggestions

Following this research there are various suggestions that can be made to the DfT which they may want to consider in the future as well as information which will be valuable and influential to learner and novice drivers when making the decision to book their practical test. These recommendations have been split into the following areas: 1) suggestions following the communications tested on behalf of the DfT and 2) some more general suggestions around methods of practise.

### 7.2.1 Message statements and email communication

- Ensure the message statements are short and concise as these are more likely to be impactful and eye-catching to the reader.
- The tone of the message statements should be positive as well as informative to avoid putting learners off their test altogether, for example, some participants suggest using the word 'encouraged' rather than 'recommended' in intervention 2. However, in line with the DfT's aims to ensure those who may not be ready are influenced to consider delaying their test, the use of words such as recommended may have the most impact on them delaying.
- Consider using more statistics or figures in the interventions as these are more likely to make individuals read the statements and influence them to practise more before booking their test. Statistics in particular on the number of crashes amongst young and novice drivers were suggested to have more of an impact on individuals delaying their driving test.
- Consider using the phrase 'less experienced' rather than 'young learners' to ensure the messages are targeted to all those who are booking their driving test.
- The email communication needs to be timely to ensure it is not too soon after individuals have booked their test or too late that they have little time to reschedule - therefore sending this 2 weeks before individuals' test date is deemed appropriate.
- Although most participants felt the subject heading of the email text was positive and impactful, some suggest using words such as 'important' to ensure individuals are likely to read and open the email. It is suggested that the email subject incorporates 'important information' into the text to have more of an impact in influencing learner drivers to not only open the email but also delay them in conducting their driving test until they are ready.

### 7.2.2 Learner and novice driver methods of practise

- Participants mentioned awareness of the test route was an influential factor in booking their driving test. However to ensure learner drivers are confident to drive in any location or area, the DfT could explore ways to encourage instructors to equip their learners to

feel comfortable driving on unfamiliar roads and use their lessons to explore a range of different situations. This would have greater benefits to ensuring road safety than focussing practise in one given area or solely test centre routes.

- Explore using a checklist approach to which individuals are signposted when booking their test online to reassure them they have covered all areas required for the practical test. Such a checklist could be signposted from the online booking system and/or the email communication sent to individuals who have booked their test.
- As time and money are a barrier to some individuals getting more practise before their test, the DfT could explore the feasibility of using communications to encourage learners to practise with family/friends as well as a professional instructor. Not only could this help save them money and time, it could increase their confidence if they are using the skills they have learnt with their instructor more frequently.
- The findings suggest participants are motivated to drive for convenience, practicality and to socialise. The DfT could explore the use of communications in order to make people more aware of the implications of over-confidence or influence of peer pressure to ensure they are not rushing to take their practical too soon.
- A key finding from this research was that safety was not necessarily at the forefront of learner drivers' minds. Although some, particularly female participants, mentioned they would like to be a safe driver; most are focussed on passing their driving test. This suggests more work can be done around emphasising the importance of safety and how to be a safe driver after passing a driving test. For example, the DfT could promote safe driving and provide documents with 'top tips' to being a safe driver. Additionally, as facts and statistics were highly advocated in the message statements, an area of consideration could be to include statistics on accident and crash rates to emphasise the repercussions of not being a safe driver.
- The DfT may look to consider investing in pre-driver education and training to improve the knowledge and attitudes of young people before they become drivers. For example, adding more questions around safety at the theory test stage. The purpose of this would be to inform young people of how to become safe drivers and better prepare them for learning to drive.
- Communications could be used with increased focus on areas which are important for safe driving such as hazard perception.
- There are currently various television and radio adverts about road safety for road users with the aim to encourage safer behaviour to reduce the number of people killed and injured on the roads every year. The DfT could consider promoting these videos on their website or social media sites to better increase the awareness of road safety amongst young and novice drivers.



## 8 Appendix A: Online focus group topic guide

### Introduction and briefing (2 minutes)

Welcome and thank you very much for taking the time to take part in this online group discussion – your views are very valuable to us! My name is [insert moderator name] and I will be your moderator, supported by [insert co-moderator name] both from BMG Research.

We'll give you a bit of background before we start.

The purpose of this discussion is to gain insight into why people decide to learn how to drive, how they learn and how they decide when it is time to book their test. We will also be asking for your views on some potential communications for the online booking system and whether you think this would have an impact on when individuals take their practical test.

The information gathered through this discussion will be confidential and individuals will not be identified in final reporting. The transcript will be used for analysis purposes only and will not be shared with anyone outside of BMG Research. We abide by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct therefore any quotes from the discussions for report writing will not identify any individual.

Our discussion today will end no later than 8pm. There are no right or wrong answers: it's just your views and opinions that count.

As a thank you for taking part, we will send you a £30 Love2Shop voucher.

Any questions about the research?

Please watch for questions that will be directed to you in this box during the study.

Questions that appear in this box should be answered by typing into the smaller box below. Please type in your responses and hit 'send' or return (no one sees what you write until you do this, but we may know you are writing). Don't worry if your response relates to a slightly earlier question – we'll either clarify with you or work this out – we know that some questions need pondering over and we'd rather you give us your feedback than not at all!

You will see written responses of the other participants. If you see a response that sparks a thought of your own please feel free to comment. We do not expect everyone to agree. It is important to know your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing.

Do not worry about spelling or grammar and finally, I hope you enjoy taking part in the Group! Ok – let's begin! Now for your first question...

### Warm Up (5 minutes)

**If you could start off by introducing yourself, your age and approximately how long you have been learning to drive.**

*Moderator to take note of whether respondents meet the recruitment criteria - in addition to other information gained during the discussion, this will be required to complete the respondent validation section on the overview sheet.*

**We are just going to start with some quick questions about your driving lessons.**

- On average, how many hours of driving lessons did/ do you have per week (for example, with a driving instructor, family or friends)?
- Approximately, how many months have you been taking driving lessons (either with a driving instructor, family or friends)?
- Have you taken and passed your theory test?

### Participant background (10 minutes)

What initially motivated you to learn how to drive? (*Moderator to explore spontaneous internal and external motivations*).

Which of the words or phrases on the whiteboard, best describes your motivations to learn to drive? Why do you say that? (*Moderator to present stimulus 1 – word cloud*)

- Are there any words that you think are missing? What are these?

What does being able to drive/having a driving licence mean to you? Why do you say that?

How do you expect to use your licence in the future?

### Experience and views of driving (10 minutes)

How are you learning to drive? (e.g. with a professional instructor, with friends/a family member, a combination of both?)

- Why did you choose to learn in this way? (*Moderator to probe on what they think are the benefits of learning this way*)
- How well do you think this way of learning is working for you so far? Why do you think that is?

How many hours of practise do you expect to have before you book your driving test? Why do you say that?

### Views on the practical test (15 minutes)

Have you booked or recently taken your practical driving test?

How did you know/how will you know when you are ready?

Which of the factors shown on the whiteboard influenced or will influence your decision to book your practical test? Please use the tick button tool in the whiteboard to select your top 3 responses (*Moderator to show stimulus 2 – ranking exercise*)

- What are your reasons for choosing those 3 responses? Of those 3, which is the most important factor and why?
- Are there any other influences you think are missing from this list? What are they? (*Moderator to probe for examples*)

What, if any, do you think are the barriers to having more practise before booking your test? (*Moderator to probe for examples*)

What factors do you think would ensure you are a safe driver/ reduce the likelihood of collisions? (*Moderator to probe if necessary: e.g. hours of practise, additional experience with parents/guardians, number of lessons, speed awareness, knowledge of road signs*)

What factors do you think would influence whether you decide to reschedule your test? Why do you say that?

**Ask those who have taken their test in the last 6 months and failed only (5 minutes)**

**You informed you have taken a driving test in the last 6 months and failed. At the time of taking the test, how confident were you that you might pass?**

- Did you feel ready at the time of the test?
- How helpful do you think it would have been when taking your test to have given yourself longer to practise? (e.g. rebooking before the test) Why do you say that?
- What advice would you give to someone thinking about booking their test?
- How would you encourage someone to practise longer?

**To what extent do you feel you had sufficient practise prior to your test and how has this affected your driving? *Moderator to probe for examples***

**Intervention testing (40-45 minutes)**

*The Department for Transport has produced a number of potential messages that they would like to gain your views and opinions on. The purpose of these messages is to ensure learner drivers are prepared and ready for their test at the time of booking. We will now present you with a number of these...*

**Intervention 1 to 4:**

**Moderator to present the focus group with a video demonstrating intervention 1 to 4. For those who have not yet booked their test, moderator to ask them to imagine they are in the position to book their driving test.**

- *LOW PRIORITY QUESTIONS: What are your views on the pre-selected date in the calendar?*
- *What are your views on being initially shown booking dates 16 weeks ahead? (Moderator to explore views for each)*
- *Do you think a 16 week timeframe to book your test would better prepare you for your practical test? Why do you say that? In what way?*
- *Would you be more likely to search a more recent or later date? Why is this?*

**WHEN TESTING INTERVENTIONS 2/3/4 ASK THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH: What are your initial views on the message statement? (*Moderator to rotate the order of the interventions across the different groups*)**

**NB: The groups will be shown the statements for x2 interventions and asked the following questions. Interventions will be rotated across the 6 groups.**

- *Is there anything about the position of the message statement that you find confusing or think can be presented differently? What would this be? (*Moderator to explore best position of the statements*)*
- *If respondents suggest changes, moderator to explore reasons why and ask for examples*
- *Looking at these statements, please use the ✓ button to show which you prefer? Why is that?*

- Is there any additional information you think should be provided to make the message statements clearer? What are these?

**To what extent do you think these message statements would influence you to delay your practical test, why is this?**

**Which parts of the message statements do you find most influential and why?**

*If respondents suggests shorter statements, moderator to probe on why and ask for examples*

**Thinking about the pre-selected dates and the messaging, which would make you more likely to do more hours of practical learning?** *(Moderator to explore if one or the other or both and reasons why)*

- How many more hours of practise do you think you would do?
- How would you spread these e.g. more in the same period of time, more in extended period of time?
- How would you go about comparing this information against the factors influencing your decision to take the practical test which we discussed earlier (e.g. financial, influence of other individuals etc)?

### **Intervention 5 and 6**

**Moderator to present the focus group with a screen shot of intervention 5 and 6: Email communication**

**Please note this email communication will be sent to learner drivers after they have booked their test but before their test date.**

**What are your initial views on this messaging? Why do you say that?**

**Is there anything you would change about the wording of this messaging to make it more influential for individuals to consider rebooking their test? Moderator to explore reasons for changes and ask for examples.**

**What are your thoughts on the email subject? Why do you say that?**

**How influential do you think this messaging is to make someone think about rebooking their test?**

**In your opinion, when do you think the most effective time would be to send this email to learners? Why do you say that?** *(Moderator to probe on 2 or 4 weeks before)*

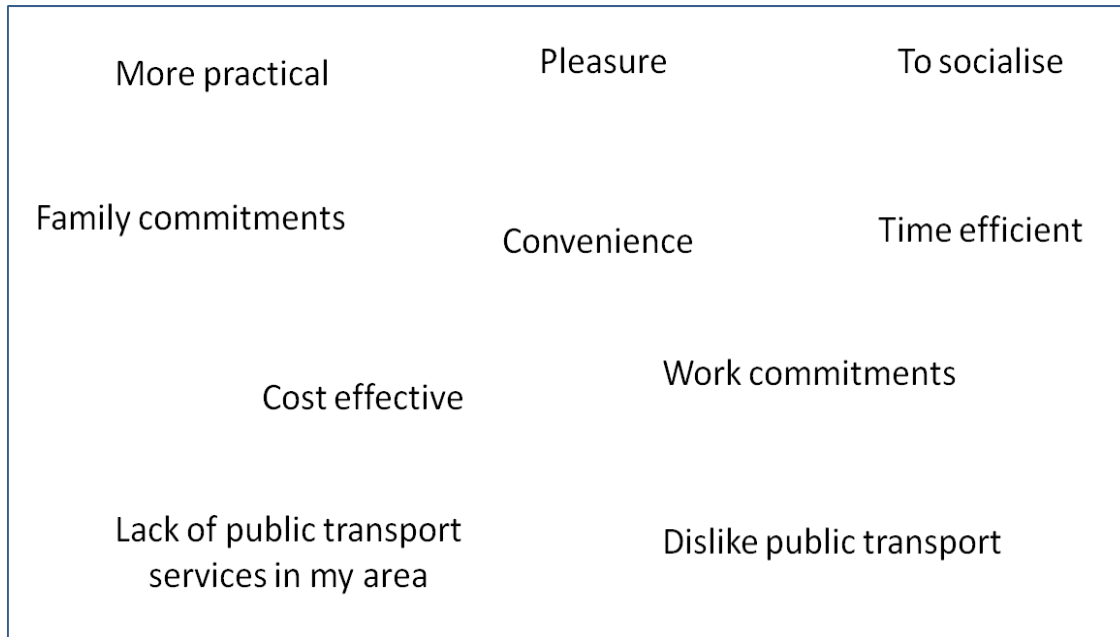
*The purpose of demonstrating these messages is to get individuals to practise more to improve road safety as novice drivers are at the highest risk of collision.*

**Finally, are there any improvements or alternative messages you would suggest that may influence learners to practise more and delay their driving test until they are ready? Moderator to probe for examples**

### **Wrap Up (3 minutes)**

- **To finish up, does anybody have any final comments?**
- Repeat assurances regarding confidentiality
- Incentives given out and signed for by participant.
- Thank and close

## Stimulus 1 – Word cloud



**Stimulus 2 – Ranking exercise**

Influential factors	Ranking
Instructors views	
Money	
Weather conditions / season	
Parents or other family members	
Confidence level	
Being familiar with test route	
Time of day of the test	
Hours of practise undertaken so far	
Influence of peers	
Child commitments	
Expiry date of theory test	
Job requirement	
Booking waiting period	

## 9 Appendix B: Copy of interventions explored with participants

### Default Date

**GOV.UK** Book your driving test

✓ Type of test ✓ Licence details **3 Test date** 4 Test centre 5 Test time 6 Your details 7 Card details 8 Confirm & pay 9 Done!

#### Test date - B - Car test

**Enter a date you would like**

Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date

**Instructor's reference number (optional)**

[What is this? What is this?](#)

Your instructor's reference number helps ensure they're not double-booked when accompanying you.

**Continue** >

### Message statements

1. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.
2. It is recommended that you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.
3. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise and get yourself ready when choosing a date.

1. Just over half of learner drivers fail their test. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.
2. Just over half of learner drivers fail their practical test. You're more likely to fail if you haven't practised enough. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.
3. Rushing to take your test and failing could cost you time and money in the long run. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.
4. Just over half of learner drivers fail their practical test. On average, each test costs over £100 (test fee and car hire). Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise when choosing a date.

1. One in five road deaths occur in collisions involving a young driver. Practising more before your test could potentially be lifesaving. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise.
2. One in five new drivers are likely to have an accident in the first six months after passing their test. Practising more before your test will make the roads safer for everyone. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise.
3. Every day 5 people in the UK die on the roads. Practising more before your test could potentially be lifesaving. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practise.

## Email communication

**Email Subject: Your upcoming driving test – do you feel ready?**

Dear [Name],

Your driving test is coming up very soon, on xx/xx/xxxx.

Taking your test when you do not feel fully prepared could cost you time and money in the long run. You can rebook your test for a later date before XX/XX/XXXX without losing your fee. One in three learner drivers reschedule their test, the majority of these delaying their test.

To rebook visit <https://www.gov.uk/change-date-practical-driving-test> and follow the simple steps.

The details of your current test booking are provided at the bottom of this email. I should like to take this opportunity to wish you safe driving for life.

Yours sincerely,

Director of Operations

Test Details:

Test date: **Tuesday 23/12/2014** Test start time: **09:07**

At:

**Gateshead**

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**FM10 10E**

Application reference number **29558901**

**Please quote the above number and your driving licence number or theory test number in all correspondence**



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BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

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