

# Road safety action plan announced to cut road deaths

- government sets out a major package of measures to reduce the number of people killed and injured on roads
- action plan to improve safety for people at every stage of life – from infants in car seats to those with years of driving experience
- increased penalties for failing to wear a seatbelt one of seventy-four measures being considered

Failure to wear a seatbelt could result in penalty points as well as fines, under new plans to reduce the number of deaths on the UK's roads.

Increasing penalties for those who do not strap themselves in is being considered as one of the 74 actions to improve road safety published by the Department for Transport today (19 July 2019). Currently, offenders are given a £100 on-the-spot fine.

In 2017, 27% of car deaths involved people that were not wearing a seatbelt – meaning 1 in 4 car deaths could have been prevented by belting up.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

The UK has some of the safest roads in the world, but we are not complacent and continue to look at how we can make them safer.

Today's action plan is a key milestone in our road safety work and sets out the important steps we are taking to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

The Department for Transport is also considering the report from the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) on seatbelt use. This report analyses which drivers and passengers are least likely to wear seatbelts, what prompts their behaviour and which interventions would be best to reduce the number of casualties.

Road Safety Minister Michael Ellis said:

Far too many people are not wearing a seatbelt while traveling in a car, needlessly putting their lives at risk.

Increasing penalties for people who disregard the simplest of way of protecting themselves is just one of a long list of actions this government is taking to help keep people safe on our roads.

A Rural Road Users Advisory Panel will also be set up to explore how to boost road safety in rural areas, particularly improving roads and traffic signs, and issues around speed limits and enforcement.

The action plan is designed to improve road safety for people at every stage of life – from birth to old age. This includes:

For children:

- a £225,000 grant has been given to Good Egg Safety to deliver a nationally-accredited safety training programme for retailers to help parents correctly fit baby and child seats. It comes after 70% of parents said they didn't know how to properly install seats
- a pledge to help improve children's safety will see research commissioned into whether mobile phone use among young pedestrians leads to an increased risk of road collisions
- to help those with special educational needs and cognitive disabilities, the government will fund research into road safety support to help children aged 7 to 18 to understand the dangers near roads

For young adults:

- the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is developing a behavioural change campaign designed to encourage learner drivers to broaden their experience, by using more rural roads and driving at night before taking their test
- research will look further at the benefits of introducing Graduated Driving Licensing on road safety
- THINK! will continue reinforcing vital road safety messages through continuous campaigns focusing on drink driving, using mobile phones while driving, speeding, and dangers around passenger distraction

For adults:

- the government is also investigating whether alcolocks – devices which measure the alcohol in a driver's breath and stop a vehicle from starting if that level is too high – can reduce drink-driving re-offending as part of rehabilitation programmes in the UK. PACTS has been given £50,000 to review drink driving trends and interventions, which will be completed early next year
- there will also be a greater focus on roads policing with a 2 year project with the Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council. This will identify best practice and gaps in services to see how policing can be improved

For older drivers:

- RoadSafe has been given £50,000 to deliver a digital platform to share best practice to reduce road safety risks for older road users

The action plan builds on a number of projects in the Road Safety Statement, published in 2015, which saw increased enforcement for drug driving, and doubling penalties for using a handheld mobile phone at the wheel.

In other road safety measures, the government is currently consulting on banning tyres aged 10 years and older from buses, coaches, minibuses and lorries. If proposals are supported, new laws could be introduced later this year, ready to come into force early 2020.

A Road Collision Investigation project, with the RAC Foundation, is also ongoing. This is examining the cause of crashes and if there is a business case for a Road Collision Investigation Branch, which would specialise in learning lessons from serious road accidents.