

Driving Instructors Scottish Council

Conference 2007 Report

We can make a difference



We must make a difference

Chairman

John Miller

Guest Speaker

Trevor Wedge

Chief Driving Examiner & Director for Safer Driving

We can make a difference. We must make a difference.

Before turning to the day's events, John Miller (Chairman) offered his and the Council's sympathies to the family of Alan Nimmo, an examiner who worked in Stirling before being killed in a motorcycle accident. He extended his sympathies to the DSA staff with whom Alan had worked and the instructors in the area by whom Alan had been recognised for his demeanour with candidates. He acknowledged the efforts of Alan Lister, chairman of the Stirling Instructors Association for his efforts in arranging that more than fifty driving school cars join the cortege.



John Miller

John Miller told conference that this had been a very busy and rewarding year. He had attended meeting with Rosemary Thew (DSA Chief Executive) and with the Summit Group comprised of the organizations which are consulted on instruction related matters. He had also presided over meetings of the Driving Instructors Scottish Council and attended several local association meetings.

A document entitled, 'Continuous Driver Development' had been sent out to Chief Constables, Road Safety Officers and Fire Chiefs. Favourable replies from them had been received and also invitations some seminars. Copies of the document were sent to DSA Chief Executive and to the Chief Driving Examiner and Director for Safer Driving, Trevor Wedge. The document had also been submitted to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee which met on the 14th and 21st March this year.

DISC had been actively promoting its policies on Continuous Professional Development, Continuous Driver Development and A United Industry both at meetings and through correspondence. Representatives had met Rosemary Thew, Trevor Wedge and Charles Morton (Registrar) at a meeting held in April this year.

A meeting of the Summit Group July this year had agreed the content of a letter which was sent Rosemary Thew asking that C.P.D. be implemented on a voluntary basis from January 2008 and made mandatory by January 2009.

The Council is studying the Transport Committee Report and will comment on it shortly. The Chairman said that the conference programme had been designed to ensure that there would be ample time to consider and discuss the recommendations of the report.

SIGNALS FOR THE FUTURE

In the future, conference was told, the Driver Record could be based on a fully structured course comprising a series of defined modules. An approved instructor would need to certify that each module had been successfully completed before presenting a candidate for test. Not only would this give the instructor more control over when a candidate could apply for a test but it would minimise parental interference.

Consideration is being given to requiring candidates to provide a dual-controlled car on test. This would make it possible to devise a driving test which had more 'real world' validity by allowing examiners to take the novice driver into more difficult situations.

Novice drivers are likely to face restrictions for twelve months after passing the test. The restrictions could apply to engine size, the type of roads on which the learner could drive, the times at which they may drive or the

number of passenger that they might be allowed to carry. DISC would prefer to see an assessment at the end of the restricted period.

In addition, DISC would like to the ‘positive marked driving test’ where a good positive drive could cancel out a serious fault resulting in a pass. DISC will recommend that there should be only one manoeuvre on the driving test allowing more time spent on driving.

Making Progress

The Council will continue to press their proposals for Continuous Driver Development for all Drivers which would result in interventions throughout a driver’s life. The Chairman accepted that this would be a difficult issue and it would be difficult to convince Ministers as they are still influenced by opinions of the electorate when seeking votes.

Mr Miller said that for these recommendations to become law, it would be necessary to present a strong, robust case which could be justified in Road Safety terms. He said, “We as an industry must also play our part in influencing Ministers and MPs that it will work. The ensuing year will again be very busy. This is why it is imperative that we have your full support and input for our work. D.I.S.C. will strive to take the lead in driving the industry forward in the noble pursuit of Safer Driving. We can make a difference. We must make a difference”.

Alasdair Morgan MSP – Deputy Presiding Officer



Alasdair put it to delegates that accidents can have many causes. He did note however that the third most common accident cause is, “driver looked but did not see”. He said that this was becoming more prevalent with the introduction of a thicker ‘A’ frame segment at the side of the windscreen.

He said that the overall trend in accident figures is still downwards and compared today’s figures with those of previous years and illustrated that although the number of cars was increasing the death rate was now much lower. This had been achieved partly because of better road and vehicle engineering and by improved training. He said that the improvement in statistics already achieved should give us hope that we can still do better.

Alasdair commented that government sometimes reacts to media pressure and introduces hurriedly developed measures. He thought that it was more important to arrive at the right response and he knew that Stewart Stevenson, Minister for Transport, was intent on doing this. He said that Mr Stewart would attend a special conference with Chief Constables and others interested in road safety to discuss a response to the problem of the number of young people who are killed in road accidents. He pointed out to conference that one in five vehicles was un-taxed and that statistics seemed to indicate that a significant number of these featured in other incidents where offences occurred. It appeared that those who flout one law are likely to be prepared to flout others.

Alasdair related the anecdote of the driver who was given the opportunity to attend a driver correction course rather than have penalty points on his licence. The offender is reported to have said that he did not think much of the course and would take the points next time.

He accepted that there were some things that government could do such as installing crash barriers but he said that this was not the answer. He expressed the view that it was not acceptable that drivers should be tested at seventeen years of age and could then drive until they were seventy with any further training.

Alasdair referred to moves to impose restrictions on novice drivers and thought that these might have a place. He told conference that New Zealand had seen a twenty-five percent reduction in young driver accidents following the introduction of such measures but suggested that this alone would not provide the full answer to the problem. While there was a clear logic in bringing the driving age in line with the voting age, he was concerned that raising the minimum age for driving could have a serious effect on those who live in rural areas and were seeking work. He said that in these cases, young people needed to be able to drive in or to get to and from work.

He suggested that better training and continued supervision was important but thought that if such things were voluntary they would only attract the people who least needed them.

Alasdair's comments were very well received by delegates.

Trevor Wedge

(Chief Driving Examiner & Director for Safer Driving)



Trevor told delegates that he welcomed the style of the conference and that he felt that we were all entering a period of change. He referred to Alasdair Morgan's comments about casualty rates and said that although they were falling, they were not coming down quickly enough.

He said, "We are on the brink of some major changes and there is a very exciting time in prospect. I will set out some of the challenges facing us during this presentation and hope that you will all share my enthusiasm for what is potentially to come and will play your part over the coming months. There is a lot to do, but what I think is key is the absolute necessity to work with others. We certainly do not know it all; still less can we deliver it all. There does seem to be a genuine feeling across the country of the need for change and particularly in the industry. We are therefore considering how we can develop a further range of options to tackle these problems. I will set out some of the work that we have been doing towards this and the opportunities for the industry, but I see a rare opportunity to shape the future and I hope that you will play your part".

Trevor referred to an article which had appeared in *The Times* on 2 January, when Stephen Ladyman (Minister for Transport) talked about road safety, how people learn to drive in Great Britain and our testing system. During the interview he had talked about tougher tests to cut young driver deaths, more rigorous training programmes and he expressed alarm at the rising toll amongst young men. Since then Dr. Ladyman has asked the Driving Standards Agency, "to do a root and branch reform of both how we teach people to drive and how we test them".

Dr Ladyman had laid down three elements. These were:

- a new competence and knowledge framework setting out what a candidate must know and be able to do;
- a modern training syllabus setting out what a candidate needs to learn;
- a systematic assessment criteria to establish that a candidate has covered the syllabus properly, and can demonstrate the required level of competence.

Delegates heard that the DSA has commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory to review the driving test which, Trevor pointed out, has remained essentially the same since driver testing began 70 years ago.

Trevor told delegates that “In a spirit of partnership working we have spent the last few months listening to partners”. This had involved organising a considerable number of themed workshops getting views from stakeholders, representatives of the industry and practitioners. He said that:

Partners told us that road safety needs to be more clearly addressed in the learning process and that, if we are to influence attitudes, we must start early.

They told us about the significance of work related driving, which accounts for one-third of fatalities, and they said that that element has been under-estimated in the past.

They told us about older drivers. Demography means that the number of older drivers is growing and we need an effective strategy to address the issues that they present.

They told us that we must engage with those outside the system to try to reduce the numbers of unlicensed and uninsured drivers.

Representatives of the ADI Industry had attended 2 workshops – pre driver education and a learner driver workshop. The main messages from the pre driver event were the importance of Parental engagement - they are important role models and road safety messages should be targeted at them. Media engagement – another key influence on this group and this channel needs to be effectively managed to ensure the correct impact is achieved. The reporting of accidents in the press needs to be more accurate and feature coverage of good drivers

Trevor told conference that at present, road death statistics in GB are perceived as being acceptable, yet in reality 250 people die on average on our roads each month and 2,500 are seriously injured. “If these sorts of figures were occurring in any other form of our daily lives, there would be public uproar” he said. He also thought that there is a lack of awareness about the vulnerability of children in particular.

The DSA has identified a four-strand response tackling Education, Training, Testing and Driving for Life.

On Education DSA plan to establish clear competencies on which to build lesson plans based on a modern competency and knowledge framework which sets out what candidates need to know and be able to do. Additionally there needs to be a training syllabus setting out what needs to be learnt and an assessment system that establishes that the syllabus has been covered and the required level of competence demonstrated. Conference was told of the need to develop a qualification framework which sits with schools and colleges so they can introduce modules leading to new qualifications and of the need to consider safety briefings for peer groups so that we can help them consider the importance of attitude; and new technologies, such as simulators, to help accelerate learning in difficult circumstances.

Delegates were told that DSA have, “identified the need for a structured process which integrates the theory with the practice. We need to look at the possibility of a new learner’s guide and logbooks and to test out three way agreements involving parents, pupils and instructors. At the moment we offer Pass Plus after someone has passed a test, which allows exposure for the first time to things like motorway driving – the question we need to ask is: should that be part of the training and should there be an assessment of readiness to take the test?”

Conference was told that DSA expanding the theory test to include eco-driving and are developing hazard perception to become more realistic. DSA believe that there is much more we can do in the future with modern assessment methods.

Continuing Driver Development

The DSA are considering how to continue driver development with after the test has been passed with things such as ‘continued learning modules’. These could be designed for the driver at work. Also being considered is some sort of advanced driver status qualification. There is now an agreed definition of what advanced driving is, but DSA do not currently look at the training. There is a need to decide whether there is a role for DSA in setting minimum standards and doing more to Quality Assure this type of training.

There may be a need to retrain motoring offenders. At present there is really no systematic way of achieving that, with different schemes operating in different parts of the country. For the older driver, DSA are looking at some kind of assisted assessment. There are already more older drivers on our roads now than at any time in the past and numbers are increasing. DSA want to help people stay safe on the roads for longer, but also to help them manage their retirement from driving.

Conference was told that “there is a great deal more work to be done on developing these options. To take this work forward, it is essential that we work in partnership. The DSA cannot possibly deliver all of this on its own”.

DSA will look to act as the body which sets the standard, and can assure the products of others but they will need to work with colleagues in other Departments like Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Local Authorities, and colleagues in the Police and, delegates were told, “of course, involving people such as yourselves from the training industry itself”.

Competency Framework

Trevor gave conference an insight in to a Competency Framework and gave a detailed example of how it would affect the way we train drivers. (Figure 1 below)

Overview of Framework

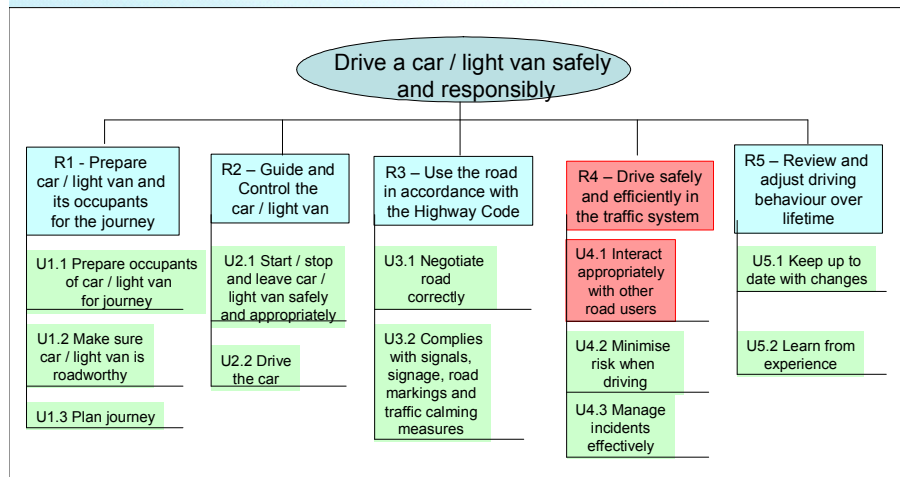


Figure 1

Taking R4 as an example conference learned that the elements of the requirement to “Drive safely and efficiently in the traffic system” could be,

Role 4 - Elements

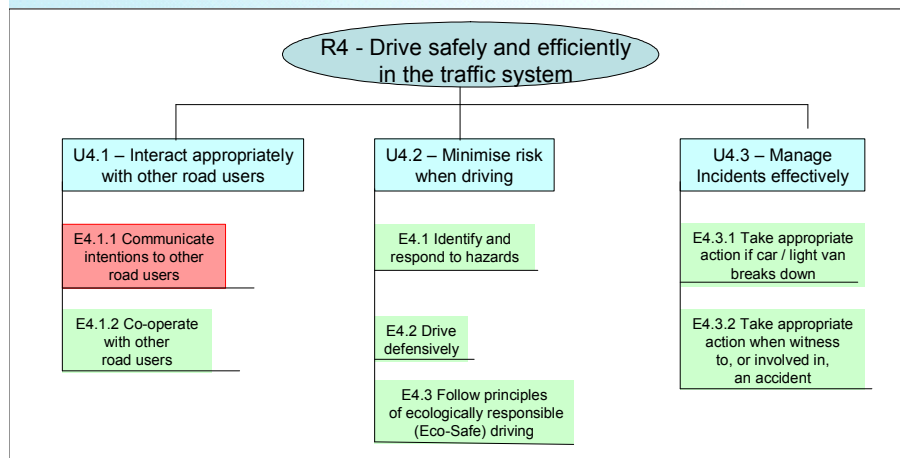


Figure 2

The performance criteria for each element have to be defined and using R4 as an example could be:

Element 4.1.1 – Performance Criteria

- You should be able to:
- Use arm signals and indicators to signal intentions in a timely fashion

- Give signals clearly and correctly according to the Highway Code
- Position car in a way that signals intentions
- Use horn and headlights as a means of communication to other road users
- Element 4.1.1 – Knowledge and Understanding

Specific knowledge and understanding that a candidate will need to demonstrate:

- Knowledge of appropriate sounding of horn (not to sound horn, unless there's a danger from another moving vehicle, when:
 - Vehicle is stationary
 - In a built up area between 11.30pm and 7am – flash headlights instead.
- Knowledge of separation distances and two second rule
- Knowledge of what determines the zone of vision
 - Buildings and hedges
 - Bends in the road or contours in the land
 - Moving and parked vehicles
 - Available light and the weather
- Knowledge of what other road users are vulnerable
- Knowledge only to flash headlights lights as an alternative to the horn (to remind others that car is there)
- Knowledge of effective scanning techniques (e.g. fishing (in front, behind, side to side)).
- Understand not to drive dangerously, drive without due care & attention, drive without reasonable consideration for other road users.

Consideration would have to be given to “Specific risky attitudes / beliefs which may affect developing competence” such as,

- Others will not be upset by your bad behaviour
- Traffic congestion situation can be improved by aggressive behaviour
- Driving violations are condoned by others
- It is acceptable to compete with other drivers
- You are a better driver than you actually are
- Road etiquette and good manners do not apply to you

There is still work to be done in developing the competency framework and testing its usability but this may well be the format of a properly structured course of driver education which would be the basis of testing and training for learner drivers of the future.

European Workshops and Studies

Conference was advised of European Workshops and Studies. Among subjects being considered are;

- Accompanied driving
- Enhanced theory test
- Hermes
- Independent driving
- Integration of the GDE Matrix into driver training and testing
- Eco driving
- Eco-Driving

Eco-safe Driving

Trevor discussed Eco-Driving with delegates and offered this definition. “Eco – safe driving is a recognised and proven style of driving that contributes to road safety – whilst reducing fuel consumption and emissions”.

He illustrated ways of cutting down on fuel consumption and consequently on harmful emissions. These included:

- Pump up to cut down
- Less clutter in your car means less CO₂
- Driving at an appropriate speed reduces CO₂
- Less stopping and starting means less CO₂
- Over revving accelerates emissions
- Idling is wasting fuel



He said that enhanced hazard perception, enhanced planning skills, maximised use of engine braking, maximise use of engine torque, use of cruise control and compliance with speed limits all helped to reduce fuel consumption with benefits for both the drivers costs and for the environment. Route planning, servicing and the use of air conditioning were all factors which had an effect on fuel consumption.

Delegates were told of a web page which would give more information (www.dft.gov.uk/ActOnCo2)

Eco-driving will be assessed from September 2008 and the competencies which will be considered are:

<p>Control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start and Move away • Accelerator • Gears • Appropriate Speed 	<p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard Awareness/Planning/Anticipation • Engine Braking • Stopping the Engine
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Trevor ended his presentation with these views about what the future held:

So what about the future?

- It will be different
- There will be challenges
- There will be changes
- It will be green!!

- Working together we can make a difference



Trevor's presentation and comments received a warm and enthusiastic response from delegates.

Question Time

- Q When is it advisable to use cruise control?
- A It is not advisable to use cruise control in a hazard intensive situation. In many cases the cruise control would be continually over ridden by driver intervention. It should be used when there is a reasonable expectation of being able to sustain a steady speed. All cars are different and the characteristics of the particular vehicle need to be taken into account.
- Q Where the engine is used for braking there is no signal. Is this potentially dangerous?
- A Where necessary a light tap on the brake pedal will give a warning of slowing down. Engine braking is different from using the gears to slow down. Gears are not for slowing down.
- Q Given the number of complaints from residents about manoeuvres being practised and tested in their area could the reverse around the corner be removed from the test?
- A Currently, legislation requires that at least two manoeuvres be tested. It would be necessary to look at whether testing one manoeuvre only would satisfy EU requirements.
- Q What action is being taken in respect of an illegal instructor working in Dundee who advertises in Yellow Pages?
- A It is inappropriate to comment on a specific case which may be subject legal action. Numbers of enforcement staff have been increased and will look at any reports of suspected illegal instruction.
- Q Will the proposed increases in test fees dissuade young drivers from taking the test and result in an increase in the numbers of illegal drivers?
- A There is an argument that raising the fees would make candidates more eager to pass first time and they would therefore take more tuition.
- Q What can be done about Trainees who fail their last attempt at Part 3 and continue to teach?
- A This should be reported.
- Q Is it not excessive to cancel a test because of a faulty side-light in broad daylight?
- A Legislation requires that the vehicle is fully roadworthy to be used on the road and that includes in the test. The situation is under review but nothing can be done under existing regulations.

Aenaes MacRitchie

DISC – CPD Trainer

10 Killed in 7 CRASHES



Aenaes continued the theme the conference when he highlighted the number of road accidents using recent news headlines. He quoted Stewart Stevenson (Minister for Transport – Scotland) as saying, “Sadly, too many young drivers are still taking unnecessary risks and putting lives in danger”.

He also referred to a comment from Jim Fitzpatrick (Road Safety Minister) “We want to send a message that passing your test and driving is not just a bit of fun. It carries responsibilities regarding the safety of themselves, passengers and road users, including pedestrians”.

Delegates heard that Government Statistics show that novice drivers in the 17 to 25 age group are more likely to have accidents in town or city centres which involve collisions with other vehicles, within their first two years of driving. The proportion of this type of accident increases as time progresses whereas the proportion of accidents involving a roadside object or nothing decreases with time during the first two years of driving.

Aenaes told conference, “Comparisons do not appear to have been made with regard to the type of accident which results in death or serious injuries. In my opinion, this is where more research and better training is required, as it appears that the majority of fatal crashes are occurring on rural roads, which are reasonably close to the victim’s home address”.

One of the SMS signs currently being displayed in Scotland has a ROAD SAFETY message which states, ‘when driving on rural roads, take extra care’. It is my considered personal opinion, that such a sign should not be necessary, provided that these novice drivers, have received proper Professional training from a DSA ADI (car) on how to drive on all types of road, and not just the roads which they may be required to drive on during their Driving Test, but especially in gaining practical experience on the various types of rural roads which exist in their locality, where they have been taught realistic hazard perception, while adopting the principals of advanced driving, along with all of the subject matter which is currently included in PASS PLUS, prior to going forward to pass the driving test.

I know the benefits I gained from my own driving experiences, where I was driving for over eleven months before passing my driving test, during which time as a learner driver, I drove throughout Scotland, gaining experience on trunk roads, city roads, and rural roads including single track roads with passing places. During this time I learnt how to be prepared for numerous unusual situations developing, such as two which can still remember quite clearly. The first being a situation where I had to deal with another driver giving a clear signal to turn right and then turning left, and a large vehicle stopping ahead on a straight road for no apparent reason, without any warning being given by either direction signals or brake lights.

During my 15 years of teaching learner drivers, to the best of my knowledge, I am not aware of any of these ex pupils having been involved in an accident, where they either sustained serious injuries, never mind fatal injuries.

During their course of lessons, they were all taught about hazard perception, road signs and markings, including the adoption of advanced driving techniques to help to mould them into becoming safe drivers for the rest of their life. I can only put their safety record after passing the test, down to these factors where they were taught to a much higher standard than that required to merely pass their driving test.

It is my personal opinion, that the Driving Standards Agency must accept part of the blame for inexperienced young drivers, becoming involved in these crashes. This is due to the fact that these young drivers think that by being able to pass the current DSA Hazard Perception Test quite easily, by pressing a mouse in reaction to a moving hazard on a computer screen, that they have learnt all they need to know about hazard perception.

Passing this test where they are only required to deal with moving hazards, gives these young drivers false confidence, as they then think that they do not need to worry about hazards any more as they have passed this part of their driving test. What DSA has not taken into account with their current hazard perception strategy, is their failure to include the environmental and static hazards which exist in the real world. Most of these young drivers are completely unaware of the real hazards which exist, even when there are no other road users around. In most cases, they will not have experienced the varied weather conditions which they may have to deal with while driving, and in particular how to deal with static hazards, such as those presented on rural roads in particular, where the grip retained by the tyres and the road holding characteristics of the vehicle at speed, will vary greatly when driving on different road surfaces, particularly when negotiating sharp bends in the road. This is exactly what the cause of the accidents which have been highlighted in the examples given earlier.

The Transport Committee Report made a number of recommendations, including those contained within this report, which could have a direct effect on all driving instructors and the pupils which they teach. As a result, I consider that we should look more closely at a number of these, I would like Conference to attempt to reach a consensus of opinion, on a number of these recommendations, which will allow DISC to express our views on each one of these following recommendations to both Rosemary Thew, Chief Executive of The Driving Standards Agency, and to Jim Fitzpatrick MP, the new Road Safety Minister.

The Report states:

“The measures implemented by the Department over the past twelve years have been incremental and have failed to cut novice driver casualties.

Indeed the rate of novice driver casualties appears to be worsening, and there is little understanding about why this is the case. A change in approach is now required. There should be research into the reasons for the increasing rate of novice driver casualties in order that policy-makers better understand the problems and are able to design initiatives to address it.

The Government must consider much bolder action to prevent these tragic deaths and injuries. There is a consensus that the process of learning to drive must be improved if casualties are to be cut. If such reforms are to be successful, it is paramount that the quality of driving instruction be significantly raised.”

Gwyneth Dunwoody MP, the Chairperson of the House of Commons Transport Committee, is quoted as stating:

“BOLD MEASURES are required to reduce the number of people killed and injured in crashes involving young drivers. Novice Drivers are clearly very vulnerable on the road. They also pose considerable danger to their

passengers and other road users. We cannot continue to waste young lives. The implementation of the measures in this report would go a long way to improve the safety of young and novice drivers, and other road users. The Department of Transport must ensure that tackling this group of casualties is given high priority across Government.”

To date we have had the following response to this document from Rosemary Thew, DSA Chief Executive who stated that:

“The Government was considering the report and would be formally responding in due course. Ministers were already committed to a wholesale review of learning to drive and that a consultation is scheduled to take place later this year.”

Debate

Delegates debated in depth the day’s events.

There was a split view on the proposal to stipulate a minimum learning period. Supporters saw it as an opportunity to ensure that learners were exposed to a wide range of road, traffic and weather conditions and thought that it would provide time for more experience to be acquired before taking the test and driving unsupervised.

Other delegates were concerned about the impact increasing the minimum age for taking the test to eighteen might have on young people in rural areas who often need to be able to drive in order to find work. Delegates were also divided on the issue of raising the minimum age.

It was suggested conference that some of the problem might be related to teaching routes rather than teaching overall driving. It was thought that the emphasis on teaching routes arose from the need to maintain pass rate.

Conference supported the proposal that instructors should sign-off each module of a structured course and there was also some support for requiring a minimum amount of time to be devoted to each module. It was thought that each module could carry a minimum and maximum time recommendation.

Delegates wondered whether there were any plans to increase the test time. They were told that nothing could be ruled out. It was also suggested that EU regulations could require that a minimum of forty minutes should be spent on driving and that this should exclude administration and manoeuvring time. If this were to be the case it would result in a longer driving period on test.

Delegates expressed concern that the introduction of CPD might be stumbling. It was thought that CPD would have to be introduced on a voluntary basis in order to convince Ministers of its value. It was put to conference that in order to ensure that Ministers were convinced, there would need to be a strong joint approach made to them.

Conference considered whether it might be possible to revalue or redefine a serious error given that areas of expertise are more important than others. It was put to delegates that some errors were too serious to overlook and it was suggested that if it were possible to overlook the error it would not have been serious in the first place.

Delegates were asked to consider whether hesitation should be considered a serious error. Those who had observed a test told conference that in their experience the examiner's decision had been fully justified.

Acknowledgements

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Alasdair Morgan attending and for his contribution to conference

Trevor Wedge for attending and for his presentation

Paul Appleby for attend and for his contributions in support of Trevor Wedge and during the debate which followed.

John Miller for his chairing of the conference

The delegates for their support and valuable contributions

The Driving Standards Agency for their assistance in publicising the event

The members of the Council who assisted on the day

The Council especially would like to thank John Townsend for his work on the Council over many years and especially for his organising past conferences.

