



**SAFER DRIVERS SAVE LIVES**



**2020**  
**PATHFINDER**  
**PARTICIPANT SURVEY**







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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## AT A GLANCE



Graduates of Pathfinder are **5 times safer** than their peers



**Less than 2%** were convicted of a traffic offence



**The Under 17 Car Club Pathfinder Initiative is an opportunity for 'rising 17s' to benefit from our tuition methodology and overall approach to novice driver education in the period shortly before they are eligible for a driving licence. The Pathfinder Initiative offers these students the safe driving approach pioneered by The Under 17 Car Club condensed to an intensive, 5-day event, brings the Charity's safe driving approach to a wider audience and substantially reduces accidents, risk of injury and driving offences amongst participants.**

The Pathfinder initiative was established by The Under 17 Car Club in 2008. Reviews of results were undertaken in 2014 and 2018, and are available for review on the [Trust website](#). In 2020, 437 past students from all years were invited to take part of whom 81 responded.

This 2020 Survey confirms that Pathfinder delivers substantial benefits to its students when compared with their peer group. Graduates of the Programme are 5 times safer than their peers with an accident rate of only 4% in the first year post-DVSA test compared against more than 20%<sup>1</sup> nationally. Furthermore, less than 2% of the students report being convicted of a traffic offence compared to an annual national average of 13.6%<sup>2</sup>.

While the national overall pass rate for the DVSA test is 46% in 2017/18, Pathfinder Students (2020 survey) achieved a first attempt pass rate of 62% with a further 26% passing on their second attempt while Car Club graduates have a 79% first time pass rate with the Club's top young drivers achieving a rate of 84%<sup>3</sup>.

These results demonstrate that the graduates of our young driver education programmes are significantly less likely to be involved in accidents, to be injured or injure, or to come to the attention of the Police than the general population of young drivers (17-24 years old). Our 2020 results are a further improvement on those from the 2018 and 2014 Pathfinder surveys, and the 2012 and 2006 Under 17 Car Club surveys.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/driving-tests-and-instructors/>

<sup>2</sup> [www.prnewswire.co.uk/news-releases/motorists-with-driving-convictions-rife-on-british-roads-179962241.html](http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/news-releases/motorists-with-driving-convictions-rife-on-british-roads-179962241.html)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/driver-and-rider-testing-and-instructor-statistics-april-2019-to-march-2020>

Visited on 03 August 2020



Pathfinder achieved **first attempt pass rate of 62%**



U17CC graduates hold **79% first time pass rate**



91% say Pathfinder makes them a **safer driver**

The results of our surveys now span 21 years. While numbers remain small relative to the whole eligible population, the consistency of results across 5 surveys and multiple intakes of students are sufficient to suggest that there is substantial merit in the tuition methodology and approach which has been sustained despite changes of instructors and venues.

Our combined survey results cover a greater time period and larger direct survey of novice drivers engaging in such extensive pre-licence age development than any published work we have discovered. We are proud that The Under 17 Car Club methodology successfully combines a focus on understanding and managing risk, safe attitudes and high technical skill.

**Our findings support the view of the Trust that appropriately structured and delivered pre-licence driver development, which focuses on developing appropriate attitudes as well as technical skill, delivers significant safety benefits to this vulnerable group:**

	General Public	Car Club Combined	Pathfinder Survey 2014	Pathfinder Survey 2018	Pathfinder Survey 2020
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year Accident Rate</b>	1 in 5	1 in 16	1 in 17	1 in 17	1 in 20
<b>DSA Test Pass Rate (X/1)</b>	46%	89%	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>DSA Test Pass Rate (All)</b>	46%	79%	53%	63%	62%
<b>Points on Licence</b>	14.3%	4%	0%	6%	<2%
<b>Pass Plus Participation</b>	15%	37%	12%	8%	4%
<b>IAM/RoSPA Rate</b>	0.5%	9%	N/A	0%	2%
<b>Other: Blue Light, Trailer, Goods Vehicle</b>	-	-	-	-	6%

The 2018 and 2020 surveys were validated by the Centre for Information Management, School of Business and Economics, Loughborough University while the previous surveys were validated by Liverpool John Moores University (2006) and Manchester Business School (2012 and 2014).

With the increasing investment in technology to support the delivery of the Trust's operations, including the increasing use of online resources for Theory Tests and Surveys, we anticipate that these Surveys will be more readily conducted, and the results produced, on a more frequent basis, with the ambition being annually.

In the meanwhile, these survey findings are being used to engage with Government, public bodies with responsibility for road safety, insurers and those involved in driver training and development. Rather than challenging these results for being based on small numbers, these bodies should be giving encouragement to larger numbers to engage and determine if the benefit of the approach can be sustained across a larger population.

One key reflection is the degree to which the emphasis on the awareness, comprehension and active management of risk is a critical element of the success of Pathfinder. We note that other organisations consider restrictions on drivers (under the age of 25) might reduce the accident and KSI rate. However, while such restrictions might have some short-term benefits, limitations on speed and passenger numbers would maintain the unfamiliarity

of novice drivers with two of the major areas of risk, i.e. carrying passengers and increased speeds (especially on rural and extra-urban roads). Rather than restricting young drivers (the enforcement of which would be near impossible for the police forces), we contend it would be more cost-effective to modify the way that they are educated to enhance their skill level.

They demonstrate that appropriately designed and delivered pre-licence education will reduce the accident and KSI rates among young and novice drivers by increasing their awareness of the causes and consequences of road safety risk and educating them in the technical and attitudinal capabilities to mitigate those risks. Such education will obviate the need for unenforceable, impractical restrictions on novice drivers while delivering the desired reduction in collision and KSI rates.



**We are grateful for the financial and practical support of the following organisations who make Pathfinder possible:**

Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner;  
Gloucestershire Police;  
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner;  
West Mercia Police;  
Safer Roads Humber;  
Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service;  
Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service;  
Three Counties Showground, Malvern;  
Drive Me Experiences, Seighford;  
IAM Roadsmart;  
IAM Roadsmart Groups in Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Yorkshire.



## 2 THE UNDER 17 CAR CLUB PATHFINDER INITIATIVE

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Developed from over 40 years' experience through the work of [The Under 17 Car Club](#), the Pathfinder Initiative is a practical and theoretical introduction to driving and road safety for pre-licence drivers (typically aged 15-16), delivered by volunteers through an intensive 5-day programme.

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### "SAFE AT 17"

This project is designed to reduce the number of road traffic accidents and collisions (particularly KSIs) and convictions amongst the most vulnerable driver group i.e. novice drivers aged 17-24. This group remains the most vulnerable and at risk of accident despite the introduction of theory and hazard awareness testing and of changes to driving tuition and the DVSA test. This suggests that the changes are not addressing the root cause of the problem, which from our studies and practice is that of awareness and understanding of road risk, and the provision of the attitudes and skills to mitigate them.

Our experience shows that the most effective means of addressing the challenges faced by novice drivers is through

appropriate pre-licence driver development. That means engaging young people before they are 17 and working with them AND their parent, guardian or other appropriate adult in a partnership environment where they can develop appropriate understanding of road risk, a positive attitude to road safety and the essential technical driving skills to be "Safe at 17".

Since 1976 over 4,500 pre-licence drivers and their parents/guardians have developed positive attitudes to road safety and high levels of driving skill with The Under 17 Car Club and the Pathfinder Initiative which commenced in Warwickshire in 2008. The curriculum and methodology were originally developed from Roadcraft (the Police Driving Manual)

and focuses on developing competence equivalent to IAM Roadsmart F1rst or RoSPA Gold standard. The Pathfinder Methodology has been refined from that to ensure that all the critical knowledge is delivered in a five-day programme which blends practice and theory, and is designed to build knowledge and capability in parallel. Progress is determined by attitudinal development and demonstrable understanding of risk supported by equivalent technical competence. Driving standards are regularly externally assessed and both Pathfinder and The Under 17 Car Club are accredited by IAM Roadsmart – the only young driver programmes to be so acknowledged.



## **Pathfinder does NOT aim to prepare students for the DVSA test or offer a substitute for the driving test.**

Real road driving scenarios cannot be fully replicated in the secure, private environment in which we necessarily work. Rather, Pathfinder introduces the essential driving knowledge and skills needed to enjoy a safe and long driving career, and delivers a valuable understanding of how to drive safely, thoughtfully and within the law. Students typically drive their family car and are taught by a parent or guardian who is in turn supported and guided by a dedicated team of Pathfinder instructors. Driving takes place in a private, safe, controlled but realistic environment, well away from the public highway.

The programme includes an introduction to advanced driving theory and basic vehicle maintenance, and an understanding of the risks, dangers and responsibilities that come with driving.

Following on from its initial success in Warwickshire in 2008, Pathfinder continues year on year to deliver a successful and enjoyable experience for young drivers. All who have attended, including the adults, take away with them valuable information allowing them to improve their safety and awareness through thoughtful driver training along with an enhanced ability to enjoy their driving on today's congested roads.

In 2020 and 2021 Pathfinder will be running at least seven events per year coinciding with local school holidays for up to 252 students at venues in Malvern, Worcestershire; Seighford, Staffordshire; and Driffield, Yorkshire.

Information is available at [www.under17driver.co.uk](http://www.under17driver.co.uk).



### 3 THE PATHFINDER SURVEY 2020

This survey was undertaken to determine whether, through their experience on the Pathfinder project, ex-students are safer than their peer group. That is:

1. Are they at lower risk of a road traffic collision, especially that of being killed or seriously injured?
2. How do they compare with ex-Members of The Under 17 Car Club who typically have a much longer pre-licence driving experience?
3. How do they compare with their national peer group in terms of accidents, convictions and DVSA Test experience?

437 past students were eligible to take part, i.e. they are over 17 and have been eligible to hold a DVSA driver's licence for at least 12 months at the date of the survey. 81 students in all responded, including a number who chose to participate and whose results are included but who have not yet taken the DVSA test. These included two students on the autistic spectrum for whom the Pathfinder programme was transformative because, while they enjoyed and benefitted from the experience, they have subsequently been able to decide for themselves not to pursue a driving licence, while one developed the confidence to travel independently, and internationally, using public transport.

The results will be used to:

- Add to the evidence base for the work of the Trust;
- Inform how the Trust should develop its activities;
- Inform the Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners for the sponsoring authorities of the outcomes in terms of their priorities;
- Inform the NPCC Lead for Roads Policing of the outcomes and influence thinking in the policing community;
- Influence approaches to novice driver development within the UK and beyond;
- Obtain practical and financial support to the initiative to ensure that no child is excluded from taking part for any reason.

**“ Ultimately, we aim to ensure that our students are Safe at 17. ”**



## 4 METHODOLOGY

The Under 17 Car Club has always informally monitored the on-the-road driving experience of former members through continuing contact, feedback and comments received. In 2006 and 2012, it undertook formal surveys of ex-members to determine the validity of these informal insights. These surveys showed that Club members had significantly better safety records than their peers. The reports are available at [www.u17ccctrust.org](http://www.u17ccctrust.org).

The 2006 survey was very extensive, including questions about the participants' experiences with the Club as well as their experience on the road. It was decided, for the 2012 survey, to separate these aspects into two surveys: one focused on internal matters, the other primarily concerned with experience on the road and those aspects of the Club's development programme which directly affect that experience.

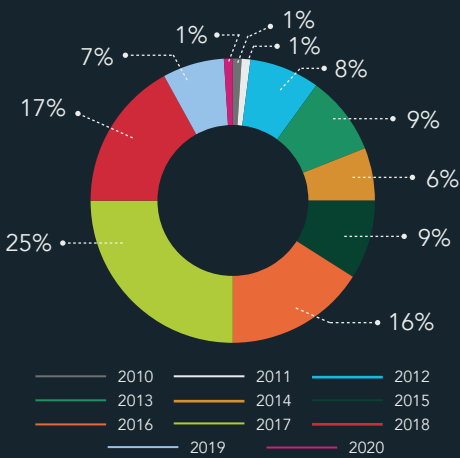
In the 2012 survey we collected information about the first-year accident rate having previously focused in the '17-24' period. This change was adopted to bring our results in line with other investigations such as that reported by the House of Commons Select Transport Committee. That approach has been carried through to the Surveys of Pathfinder Students: the surveys are only sent to participants who are aged over 18 and therefore have been eligible to be driving on the road for **more** than one year.

The 2020, 2018 and 2014 Pathfinder Student Survey Questions (Appendix Two) were derived from the 2006 and 2012 Car Club Surveys and were reviewed and refined with academic partners at Loughborough University and Manchester Business School. The surveys were placed online and tested by Club Officials and Marshals for functionality and clarity leading to a number of minor changes. IP address tracking was used to ensure unique responses.

Whilst the 2014 Pathfinder Survey was, of necessity, very small (17 responses from 24 students), the 2018 Survey had 54 responders, giving much greater confidence in the results. In 2020 we again approached all those who had participated in Pathfinder since 2011 (due to GDPR we do not have access to the contact information for participants before that date) and who are eligible to take part. Of those 437 individuals approached 81 responded (of whom 74 had taken and passed the DVSA test), a response rate of 19%. We consider this to be a good response rate particularly given that contact with the participants is limited to a single 5-day event.

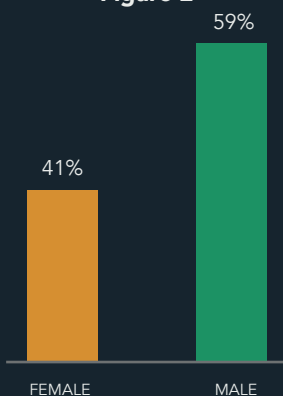
44% of those eligible to participate in the survey identified as female with 56% identifying as male (Fig. 2). Of those responding to the survey, 41% identified as female and 59% as male; this is reflective of a shift we have seen in attendances with a greater proportion of female participants. More recently we have adapted our registration process to allow for those identifying as non-binary and this will be reflected in future surveys.

Figure 1



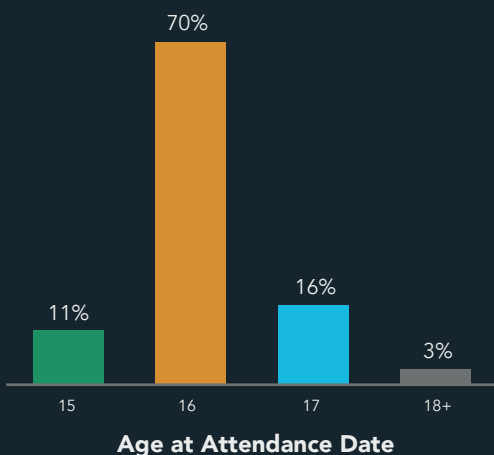
Year of Attendance for 2020 Survey

Figure 2



Gender of 2020 Survey Participants

Figure 3



Age at Attendance Date

We recognise, relative to the total number of drivers in the 17-24 age group in the UK, that our numbers are small. However, we have ensured that all those eligible to participate in the survey have had the opportunity to do so giving as complete a response as is possible. The substantial response rate across five surveys, together with a high degree of consistency in the findings themselves, give us confidence that the results are a strong indicator of potential outcomes. We would suggest that, if the scheme were extended to the whole eligible population, the benefits in risk reduction would be likely to greatly exceed the costs of delivery. The combined results across all surveys, covering a 21-year time period (1999-2020) with a consistent pattern over that time, adds further confidence to the findings.

This survey was undertaken to determine whether, through their learning experience on Pathfinder, ex-students are safer than their peer group; i.e. are they at lower risk of a road traffic collision, especially that of being killed or seriously injured; and how do they compare with their peer group in terms of accidents, convictions and DVSA test experience. The results are being used to inform how the Trust should develop its activities and influence approaches to novice driver development throughout the UK and beyond to make more young drivers "Safe at 17".



## 5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In relation to the survey thanks are due to:  
Pathfinder Students for completing the survey;  
Their parents/guardians for investing the time in their children;  
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner, Martin Surl;  
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, John Paul Campion;  
Gloucestershire Police;  
West Mercia Police;  
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service;  
Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service;  
IAM Roadsmart;  
Trustees and Officials of the Trust for their continuing support.

This report has been compiled on behalf of the Trust by Dr. John Beckford, Phil Hagen and Paul Silverwood, Trustees of The Under 17 Car Club Charitable Trust.

The survey and its findings have been independently reviewed by Professor Peter Kawalek, Director of the Centre for Information Management, School of Business and Economics, Loughborough University.



# 6 SURVEY KEY FINDINGS 2020

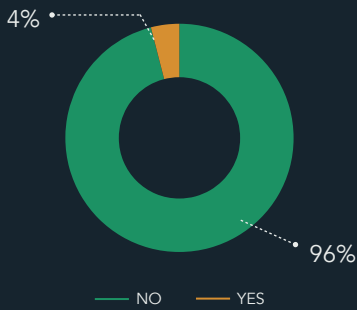
This section of the report will consider the critical questions concerned with safety and road risk, the survey results and a comparison with The Under 17 Car Club surveys and, where appropriate, national statistics.

The Chair of the Commons Select Transport Committee, launching a fresh inquiry into young and novice drivers in July 2019 said:

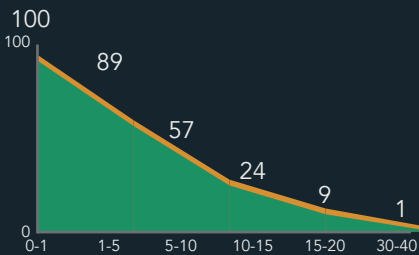
“Road traffic collisions are one of the biggest killers of young people. In 2017, road traffic collisions accounted for 15% of deaths for people aged 15 to 24. Young and novice drivers are three times more likely to be involved in a road traffic collision than more experienced drivers.”<sup>4</sup>

This Inquiry was paused leading up to the December 2019 General Election and restarted in the new parliament.

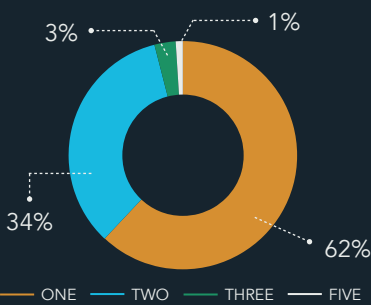
**Figure 4: First Year Reportable Accident Rate**



**Figure 5: Annual Mileage Driving ('000s)**



**Figure 6: Practical Driving Test Attempts**



## 6.1 ACCIDENT RATES

In the 2020 Pathfinder Survey we have moved to measuring “reportable accident rate” for our students in line with Government statistics. It is pleasing to report that the first-year reportable accident rate for Pathfinder participants is about 4%, 1 in 20. (Fig. 4) This rate compares very favourably with that of 1 in 5 reported by the Department for Transport<sup>5</sup>. A reportable accident is one in which there is injury to persons or damage to property, must be reported to police if details are not exchanged with other interested parties, and is captured in official statistics. Taking the whole sample completing the survey, the accident rate for all Pathfinder participants across all their years of driving (approximately 119 years of driving on the road between them) is 14% (1 in 12) or one accident in every 11.9 driving years. This appears to be a very low rate for young and novice drivers. Of those individuals reporting accidents no fatalities or injuries were reported.

## 6.2 AVERAGE RESPONDENT ANNUAL MILEAGE

The Trust is also pleased to note that the average mileage being driven by our young drivers after their driving test is broadly consistent with national averages, with 55% driving over 5,000 miles per annum and 24% over 10,000 miles per annum. (Fig. 5) This compares to the national average in 2017 of 7,800 miles per annum.<sup>6</sup> We can thus reasonably infer that the accident rate amongst Pathfinder graduates is far better per mile than the general young population, as well as in absolute terms.

## 6.3 DRIVING TEST PERFORMANCE

Of the respondents, 62% (63% 2018) passed the DVSA Practical Test at the first attempt while a further 34% (26% 2018) passed at the second attempt, seven respondents reported had not yet passed their practical test at the time of the survey. The rate of 62% is lower than the pass rate recorded for Car Club Members, the difference perhaps reflecting the much greater experience of Car Club Members, but still significantly higher than that reported of 45.9% on any one occasion for the general population. (Fig. 6)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/transport-committee/news-parliament-2017/road-safety-young-novice-drivers-launch-17-19/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/about/statistics>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts09-vehicle-mileage-and-occupancy>

Visited on 03 August 2020



It is a conscious and deliberate decision by the Trust to focus our attention and that of our Car Club members and Pathfinder students on learning to drive as a life skill. We do not 'teach the test' so our success suggests the U17CC/ Pathfinder methodology ensures that the requirements of the DVSA curriculum are observed whilst Members are perhaps better prepared through longer exposure and greater (private road) driving experience than their peer group.

#### 6.4 THEORY /HAZARD TEST PERFORMANCE

Progression through Pathfinder also depends on successful completion of driving theory tests drawn from the DVSA handbook. Each student will have completed at least five Theory Tests during the programme. Drawing on the published theory test information and Highway Code, we have developed and deployed an online theory test tool.

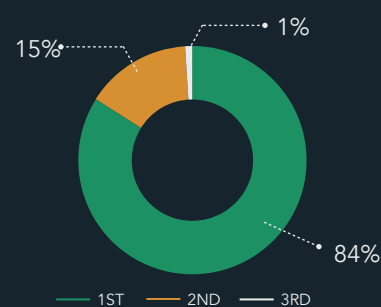
It is clear that the superior test performance extends beyond the Practical Test, with our respondents' first time pass rate at 84% versus the national average pass rate of 47.1%\* (2019/20) (Fig. 7); similarly the Hazard Perception first time pass rate for our respondents is 95% against the estimated national average pass rate of 50%. No Government statistics on this test appear to have been published. (Fig. 8)

#### 6.5 CONVICTIONS

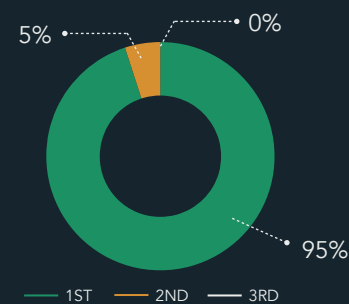
Of the 81 participants in the survey only a single driver (under 2%) had been convicted of a traffic offence compared with nearly 24%<sup>9</sup> of all drivers nationally, and even then only of a single offence. (Fig.9)

Around 12% of the Respondents had taken an additional driving qualification at the time they completed the survey (including 4% Pass Plus, 2% IAM Roadsmart and 1% for each of Trailer, PSV, Goods and one 'blue light' trained). This continues to be somewhat disappointing given the emphasis placed on "learning for life" on the course. However, we continue to monitor this and look for ways to encourage greater uptake, particularly with our partners at IAM Roadsmart (with whom we've had notable success at The Under 17 Car Club).

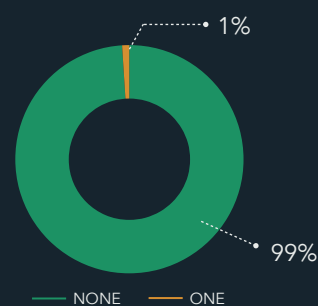
**Figure 7: Theory Test Attempts to Pass**



**Figure 8: Attempts to Pass Hazard Perception Test**



**Figure 9: Drivers with Convictions**



<sup>7</sup> <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/driving-tests-and-instructors/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/news-releases/motorists-with-driving-convictions-rife-on-british-roads-179962241.html>

Visited on 03 August 2020

## 6.6 ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

The Trust and its operations are open to all, with eligibility being determined only by age and physical ability. It is essential that a driver is able to operate the controls and make necessary observations. Similarly, participants must be sufficiently mature to not be overwhelmed by the challenges inevitably present. The Pathfinder Initiative in particular is a demanding and intensive programme and we do not believe that it is suitable, in general, for younger students. It is also important that their learning is not allowed to deteriorate for too long before they become licensed drivers, hence the focus on 15-17 years of age.

Pathfinder is open to all who apply regardless of financial, educational or physical challenges. We have welcomed on the programme students who have been unable to contribute financially, with physical disabilities and with Asperger's Syndrome or on the Autistic Spectrum. Every one of these students has both enjoyed the programme and benefitted from it. Financial support to participation is made available to the Trust by the Police and Crime Commissioners for Gloucestershire and West Mercia, by Safer Roads Humber and by The Under 17 Car Club Charitable Trust itself.

**No child has ever been denied a place on Pathfinder; we have always found a way to support them and their family or other supporters.**



Students on the Pathfinder Programme follow a grading and assessment structure which mirrors that of The Under 17 Car Club. There is a very broad equivalence in terms of knowledge, attitudes, standards and competencies between the 'Car Club' Grades 5, 4 and 3 and the Pathfinder Levels 3, 2 and 1. The major difference, and it is we believe of great significance, is the level of experience. Pathfinder is limited to about 35 hours in total, of which the student can expect to spend about 25 hours at the wheel. A Car Club Member attaining Grade 3 would have invested a minimum of 60 hours driving under a much wider variety of conditions and environments.

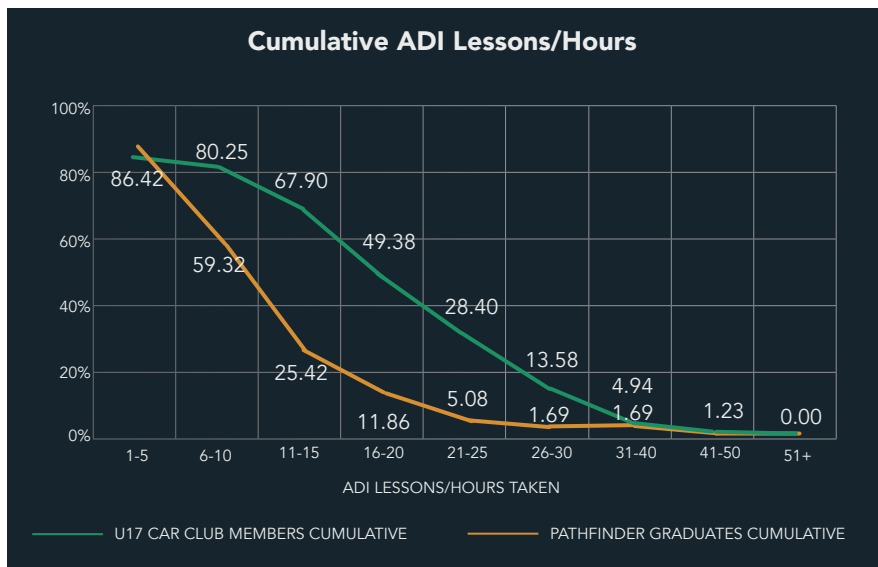
Driving standards at the Club are evaluated annually by an external assessor, typically an observer or examiner with IAM Roadsmart or RoSPA. Pathfinder adopts the Car Club instruction model and its current Chief Instructor is a National Observer with IAM Roadsmart. We have also been fortunate since the commencement of Pathfinder in Gloucestershire in receiving support from a serving Police Class One Driver and Collision Investigator as well as Officers from West Mercia Police, Firefighters from Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and Road Safety experts from Safer Roads Humber. Taken together, these help to enhance and assure the quality of the process.



## 6.7 FROM PATHFINDER TO DVSA TEST

The Trust recognises that the public roads are a very different driving environment to those which it creates for its young drivers. It therefore encourages them, however highly graded, to develop their skills and knowledge with an ADI before attempting their DVSA test. The survey shows that the vast majority of respondents (88%) did take such lessons as recommended.

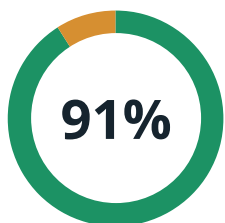
As the table shows, and we would expect, Pathfinder Students, on average, require a greater number of lessons with an ADI than Car Club Members. This reflects the limited time on the programme compared with the Car Club experience. Overall though, 59% of Pathfinder Students required fewer than 20 hours with an ADI before passing the DVSA Test. We believe that this is a better than average performance, particularly when combined with the better than national average pass rate. This suggests that Pathfinder contributes to value for money as well as safety.



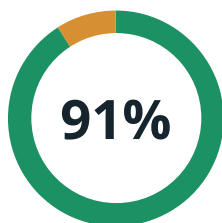
## 6.8 PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

The final section of the survey asked participants to reflect on their experience of the course itself.

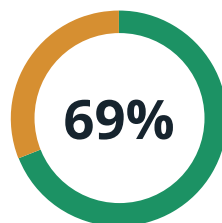
### KEY MESSAGES



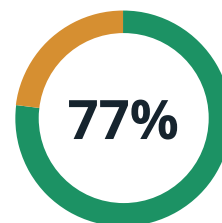
91% of the Respondents (87% in 2018) stated that the course had been very useful in making them a **better driver**; 9% considering it useful.



91% (78% in 2018) considered it very useful in making them a **safer driver**, the remaining 9% considered it useful



69% (83% in 2018) thought it very useful in making their driving **more enjoyable** with 27% rating it useful;



77% thought the **course was excellent** with 21% rating it very good and 2% good;



99% (92% in 2018) rated the course excellent or very good **value for money** with the remaining 1% rating it good.

The rising cost of venues in particular has increased the cost of delivery of Pathfinder with inevitable consequences for pricing. It is notable that, as in the 2014 survey, cost was listed as a major consideration for between 25% and 30% of those surveyed. It remains vital that Pathfinder maintains the ability to provide bursaries to keep participation prices down for financially deprived candidates. We will continue to seek sponsorship and support from Police and Crime Commissioners, Road Safety Partnerships and other agencies.

100% of participants believed that participating in Pathfinder had a positive impact on their behaviour on the road and improved their knowledge of how to drive safely.

That 100% of participants would recommend Pathfinder to their friends is testament to the hard work and contribution of all the Pathfinder volunteers and the guardians of the Students.





## 6.9 PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

The participants in the survey were provided with the opportunity to make comments on their experience with the Pathfinder course and its impact on them. All of these comments have been included below and on the following pages.

**2** I now drive as a Paramedic and have therefore completed police blue light training courses. However, my experience on the Pathfinder training prior to passing my test at 17 made me very aware of the need to drive carefully which meant when I undertook the driving course for driving an ambulance at speed I was already very conscious of the need to be aware of the road and possible hazards beforehand.

**6** The Pathfinder course was an excellent way of teaching my son to drive in a safe environment without any stress. The other benefit I had not considered was spending time with Alex which otherwise would not have happened. I really liked the structure of the course and the extra safety and maintenance aspects which would have been missed with just lessons. Also having the opportunity to let him drive different vehicles was valuable to his confidence. Watching the crash film was an excellent way of making him think about the serious responsibility of driving. Thank you all.

**8** My driving instructor said that he loves having students who have done the Pathfinder course as he feels we already have a good firm set of safe driving skills. Even he said that I wouldn't need as many lessons with him because of the pathfinder course. I tell everyone to do the course if they can, it boosted my confidence and right from the beginning made me drive safely.

**3** I felt the course gave me confidence very quickly but it also ensured that I understood the risks of over confidence. The only accident I have ever been involved in was the other driver's fault and I feel sure that I have avoided other accidents by being the more vigilant driver despite my age and sex.

**9** I thought the course was excellent and very good value for money. It was so good my Dad took my younger sister on it 2 years later and he said there was a lot more of an input on road safety with the fire service giving a talk and having the opportunity to drive a fire engine as well as a police car. An excellent 5 days well worth the money.

**1** **Pathfinder was recommended to me and I have now recommended it to many friends. Three of us took part in February 2019 and we have all since passed and enjoying driving safely. Thank you to all the volunteers, you were great.**

**4** I have recommended the course to many other people over the years and will continue to do so as I found it invaluable. I wish you luck in continuing to provide this essential course for young drivers.

**5** An excellent and enjoyable course that should be mandatory for all new/young drivers to improve road safety.

**7** The course was absolutely brilliant - I really love driving but I'm also very aware (because of doing the course) that it could kill me or other people, so I think I drive far more safely. Even my mum says she drives far more safely since she did the course with me.

**10** A brilliant practical opportunity to gain the driving skill necessary before going out on the roads.

**11** The course is excellent. I am 100% sure that I have a better knowledge of risk than friends who have not attended it.



**12** They are long days with additional travel before and after and so a bit exhausting for both the team holding the event and the students. Only able to do half+ days but extremely helpful to give me confidence when getting on the road for real. Note that not everyone takes to the "role playing" item that we had at Throckmorton.

**15** Excellent introduction to driving. Great thing to do to learn the manoeuvres as well as the driving. Learning the consequences of speed was enlightening. Enjoyed trying different styles of cars too. This helped me and my mum master parallel parking. I would recommend this course to all young drivers as you know the basic handling of a car before you go on the road.

**19** I believe it makes you more aware and able to drive and CONTROL the car before you are in the very stressful real road scenario, which I found very difficult.

**23** A fantastic project giving young adults valuable skills for going out on the road. We highly recommend it!

**25** Harry is autistic, and his anxiety problems caused him to drop out, it was the best and safest environment to try, however has decided driving is not for him, and gone on to travel by public transport, something he was unable to do.

**13** My Dad has posted a short article on his modelling blog about our course at Driffield. <http://www.cherryclan.com/2018/04/pathfinder-project/> He fully intends to sign up my younger brother for the course as well.

**16** had already been driving with the U17cc since Feb 2013 but the course still was very useful especially the lectures. I was able to have some sessions with instructors that pushed me towards my Grade 1.

**17** Live in central London now so do not own a car and hardly need to drive. When I lived at home I drove a lot.

**20** I would also recommend a shorter 3-day course generally also for young people who are under 18 to get to grips with controlling the car, lose confidence and fail the DSA.

**21** A fantastic opportunity, made learning to drive so much easier.

**24** Following the course, Hannah has not been able to follow up driving lessons with an instructor due to Covid 19. She is still apprehensive regarding driving on the roads and felt that she would like to return to Pathfinder to gain her level 3 before she felt ready to move to the next stage. However this course, did give Hannah the opportunity to have the driving experience off road that she wanted together with expert advice on driving and safety. We saw her confidence grow over the 5 day course. This course was invaluable to Hannah. Hopefully we will see you soon once Covid-19 restrictions allow. Thank you.

**26** Due to the quality and value, I have returned with other students.

**14** Following the course Cameron had the confidence to drive as soon as he was able. Last year he drove from Brighton to Newquay, he planned his route, included plenty of rests and knew where to get petrol ahead of time. He knew roughly when he would need to refill and looked for cost effective garages away from the motorways to fill up at and headed there when planned. The course gave him a love for driving and an appreciation for the differences in cars. I'm looking forward to taking my daughter in a couple of years.

**18** The time required by a parent/guardian and suitable car is the most deterring factor for take up.

**22** This course was absolutely brilliant and definitely made me a confident and safer driver. It's a shame that subsidies are not available in all parts of the country because my younger cousin would love to do the course but the cost is too high for her parents. This course saves lives and I would recommend everyone does it.

**27** Very well organised, friendly staff, great variety of activities especially braking distance demonstration.

**28** Had I not had the police discount and the bursary I would not of able to participate. This is a really important programme. There needs to be more of it and in more places and more advertising in schools and colleges.

**31** I would recommend to anyone thinking of learning to drive.

**32** It was great and has had a lasting impact on my driving.

**36** The cost was well worth it due to the fact that I needed a lot fewer driving lessons afterwards. I thoroughly enjoyed the course (so did my Dad). The visit to Bovington Tank Track [at a post-Pathfinder Under 17 Car Club event] was particularly memorable. I have recommended the course to others on many occasions and so have my parents. I am aware of other students who have taken the course on the back of our recommendation.

**39** Very useful programme ensuring that you are ready and informed about what to expect when starting your driving. Also helps reduce cost of driving lessons as the basics have already been covered and you can concentrate on driving techniques straight away, rather than spending time learning to manoeuvre a car.

**29** Pathfinder was an excellent opportunity to gain valuable experience and knowledge, it prepared me for what was to come on the road. I thoroughly enjoyed my time, with brilliant people, the right approach and a massive 'leg up' to getting my driving licence. Thank you.

**33** A worthwhile and useful experience.

**34** Pathfinder really improved my confidence on the road.

**30** I'd never considered the possible hazards as a passenger. I have been reminded of various aspects of the learning on the course. I found it invaluable and I have recommended the course to several people. I'm so glad I had the opportunity and I know my parents were happier with me venturing out on the road as they had shared the experience with me.

**35** Great course - helps so much.

**37** The course was extremely useful and we have recommended the course many times over the years.

**38** Highly recommend this course. I learned so much about safety and hidden dangers on the road.

**40** Really great as not a natural driver!!





**41** Because I practised in multiple vehicles, it gave me a good perspective of how other vehicles view the road and how I should take into account that view when making decisions on the road - especially from extreme sized vehicles such as the juggernaut cab.

**44** Found 5-day course too long with too many cars and therefore less interaction with supervisors. Could Pathfinder consider a 3-day course repeated over the week to reduce busyness and tiredness and keep teenagers' motivation.

**46** The need to have a parent accompanying for the whole week stops some people from attending, but I think you now do some across a weekend, which is easier for them. Very glad I did the course and saved me a lot of money on driving lessons! Did the course a week before my 17th birthday and passed my test within three months so timing worked out well for me.

**42** Because of the under 17's pathfinder course, when I took my actual driving lessons, I was allowed onto main roads within the first lesson. I also think that because of the intensity of the course and all the different films and lectures we received about safety, it gave me the confidence and knowledge enough to pass first time, with the theory and practical test.

**45** The driving course made me very aware of the dangers when driving, I have become a much more confident driver and have never had an accident or been prosecuted for any motoring offence, mainly because the course taught me a natural respect for driving and consideration for other road users.

**47** Collisions mentioned earlier were just scrapes of the car- once with a wall and once with the bumper of a parked car.

**43** A very good course which introduced me to a range of unusual/ emergency situations that I might encounter on the road but which cannot be practised during normal road instruction; interesting talks from professional drivers (e.g. police); a chance to drive different types of vehicles in a safe environment; useful hints and tips - altogether very helpful and useful.

**48** Samuel has had a rocky road. His driving practice stopped when he enlisted in the military. Following a medical discharge he hasn't yet had the opportunity to restart driving. This will hopefully be rectified in the next few months.



## 7 CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

We believe the statistics we have gathered from real-world participants in both Pathfinder and the Under 17 Car Club provide compelling evidence that the education and experience we offer have a significant, measurable impact on road safety amongst newly-qualified young drivers.

It appears to make them more skilled drivers, demonstrated by the lower accident rate, greater success rate in the DVSA test, and lower likelihood of committing Motoring Offences once qualified.

From the feedback we have received, graduates of our schemes are very likely to recommend the courses to others which both generates further (welcome) demands on the Trust and a cascading virtuous effect of encouraging more young people to take our driving courses.

It is important in understanding the findings of this survey to recognise substantial differences between Pathfinder, The Under 17 Car Club methodology and the traditional approach of the statutory authorities:

1. The Club and Pathfinder process requires the active involvement of the Members' parents (or Associates) over an extended period.
2. Club Membership extends over many hundreds of hours and miles.
3. The Pathfinder experience is very intensive in comparison with the longer term Under 17 Car Club experience.
4. Progression through the grading system is as much a function of driving attitude as it is of technical skill.
5. Driving is a privilege for Club Members and Pathfinder Students, not a right: this generates appropriate behaviour.
6. The Under 17 Car Club curriculum is much broader than the norm including:
7. First Aid Training
  - a. Skill Development (close manoeuvres)
  - b. Skid Pan Training
  - c. Speed Awareness Training
  - d. Advanced Car Control (Cornering and Vehicle Dynamics)
  - e. Motorway Training
  - f. Vehicle Safety and Routine Maintenance

- g. Training
- h. Driving Theory Training
- i. Hazard Perception Training
- j. Night Driving
- k. HGV Driving.
- l. Pathfinder includes elements a, b, d, g, h, i of the Car Club process but adds to that the following:
  - i. Brake & Avoid
  - ii. Discussion on Consequences of RTC
  - iii. Assertiveness Training
  - iv. Police Drive.

Future surveys will include assessment of attitudinal change in relation to risk and safety awareness.

Perhaps the argument should be that the example shown by the parents/ guardians of Car Club Members and Pathfinder Students, if followed at a national level, would have a significant impact on novice driver KSIs. The Pathfinder Initiative and Under 17 Car Club events are believed to be the only ones in which the parent or guardian of the student is an active participant in the teaching and learning process. We believe, rooted in our own experience as parents taking our children through this education process, that this involvement is a material factor in the success of the programmes and we will take steps to investigate the impact more objectively. We do note that the requirement for parental involvement can inhibit participation for some young people whose circumstances prevent their involvement such as those in care or being fostered. Where that has been the case we have, with the support of the Police and Crime Commissioners, sought to provide a surrogate in this role.

Rather than challenging these results for being based on small numbers, encouragement should be given to larger numbers to engage and determine if the impact can be sustained across a larger population.

With the average cost per fatal collision on UK roads having increased to more than £2m (in 2016<sup>10</sup>), then the potential saving from reducing young driver accident rates from 20% to 4%, as evidenced above, would save the UK economy £472m<sup>11</sup> per year in addition to avoiding the human cost of losing loved ones. (Based on 337 young driver car fatalities in 2013, being the most recent data we have found.)

One of the key reflections for us is the degree to which the emphasis on the awareness, comprehension and active management of risk is a critical element of the success of Pathfinder. We note from public reports and submissions to government that other organisations consider restrictions on drivers (under the age of 25) in the immediate post-test period might reduce the accident and KSI rate.

While such restrictions might have the benefit suggested, the limitations on speed and passenger numbers would simply maintain the unfamiliarity of the novice drivers with two of the major areas of risk, i.e. carrying passengers and increased speeds (especially out of town), which can have a substantial effect on vehicle handling and dynamics for which there is limited opportunity in mainstream driver education. It is our contention that, rather than restricting young drivers (the enforcement of which would be near impossible for the police forces), it would be more cost-effective to modify the way that they are educated to enhance their skill level. Such an approach may well require additional post-licence education and practice enabled through a graduated licensing scheme.



<sup>10</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/322862/average-cost-of-road-accidents-and-casualties-in-great-britain-uk/>

<sup>11</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/448039/young-car-drivers-2013-data.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/448039/young-car-drivers-2013-data.pdf)







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# APPENDICES

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## 8 APPENDIX 1: ABOUT THE UNDER 17 CAR CLUB

The Under 17 Car Club was founded by the, now both deceased, children's author Sandy Barrie and racing driver Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams in 1976 when they realised there was no organisation which offered a safe, organised environment in which children with an interest in driving, cars and motorsport could learn to drive and practice their skills.

Some 44 years later and continuing to thrive, The Under 17 Car Club Limited offers the only nationally available, not-for-profit young drivers programme. Since 1976 in excess of 4,500 pre-licence drivers, typically starting at age 12, and their associates have developed positive attitudes to road safety and high levels of driving skill with the Club and there are past members who are now associates for their own children. Our curriculum and methodology are based on Roadcraft and developing competence equivalent to IAM Roadsmart F1RST or RoSPA Advanced Driving Gold standard. Progress is determined by attitudinal development and demonstrable understanding of risk; standards are regularly externally assessed.

The Club operates at a variety of venues in Central and Southern England offering around 35 core events each year and welcomes young people and their parents/guardians from all walks of life. All the activities of the Club are developed and delivered by volunteers. Many are the parents/guardians of current driving members or those whose children, now grown up, have benefitted from the Club. Many former members return to the Club as volunteer Marshals and Instructors.

There can be no doubt that novice drivers constitute the highest risk group on UK roads. Drivers in the 17-24 age group comprise around 1 in 8 of licensed drivers but are involved in 1 in 3 road traffic collisions. A novice driver is understood to have a 1 in 5 probability of a collision in their first 12 months on the road. The House of Commons Select Transport Committee recently recorded that collision probability at nearly 1 in 4 for male novice drivers.<sup>12</sup>

The Under 17 Car Club Charitable Trust (the Trust) operates two schemes designed to address this problem:

- The Under 17 Car Club
- The Under 17 Car Club Pathfinder initiative.

The Club accepts members (and their parents/guardians) from age 11 and provides an extended development and tuition methodology until age 17+. Progression through the grading structure depends on development of appropriate technical skills, risk understanding and management, and risk-averse attitudes. Pathfinder offers a 5-day intensive experience to rising 17s using the opportunity to drive pre-17 to deliver powerful and engaging road safety messages to the students and their parents/guardians.

## 9 APPENDIX 2: 2020 PATHFINDER SURVEY QUESTIONS

QUESTION	ANSWER CHOICES
Gender	Male Female
Year of Attendance	2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017
Age at Attendance	15 16 17 18+
Level Achieved on Course	Ungraded Level 3 Level 2 Level 1
Location Attended	Cheltenham Long Marston Throckmorton Cosford Malvern Seighford Driffield
Did you receive lessons from an ADI after receiving Provisional Licence?	Yes No
Number of ADI Hours before passing Test	1 – 5 6 – 10 11 – 15 16 – 20 21 – 25 26 – 30 31 – 40 41 – 50 51+
Did you practice on the road with an adult?	Yes No

How many hours did you practice before passing your Test	1 – 5 6 – 10 11 – 15 16 – 20 21 – 25 26 – 30 31 – 40 41 – 50 51+
How many attempts to pass Theory Test?	{numeric box}
How many attempts to pass Hazard Perception Test?	{numeric box}
How many attempts to pass Practical Test	{numeric box}
Have you taken any Advanced Driving Qualifications since passing Test	None PassPlus IAM RoSPA Trailer Test PSV Light Commercial Heavy Commercial HGV Other
When driving, do you drive for?	Domestic To/from work Multiple locations with work
What is your average annual mileage?	<1000 miles 1000 – 5000 miles 5000 – 10000 miles 10000 – 15000 miles 15000 – 20000 miles >20000 miles
Have you been involved in any accidents whilst driving?	Yes No
How many times	{numeric box}
How many vehicles involved?	0 1 2 3+
Was anyone injured	Yes No
Was anyone killed?	Yes No
Was there an insurance claim made?	Yes No



If claim, were you at fault	Yes No
Have you been convicted of a motoring offence?	Yes No
If conviction, of what type	Speeding Drink/Drugs Careless/Dangerous Other
How many points do you have on your licence?	{numeric box}
How effective has Pathfinder been in:	
• Making you a better driver	Very useful Useful Not Useful
• Making you a safer driver	Very useful Useful Not Useful
• Making your driving more enjoyable	Very useful Useful Not Useful
How would you rate your enjoyment of Pathfinder?	Excellent Very Good Good Poor
Did the course represent value for money	Excellent Very Good Good Poor
Was cost a major consideration in applying for Pathfinder?	Yes No
Would cost deter others you know from applying?	Yes No
Would you recommend Pathfinder to others?	Yes No
Comments?	{free text}

# 10 APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF VALIDATION

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17<sup>th</sup> August 2020.  
01509 223039  
p.kawalek@lboro.ac.uk

Dear Professor Beckford,

## **The Under 17 Car Club Charitable Trust, Pathfinder Participant Survey 2020**

I am glad to have been asked to review the Pathfinder Participant Survey 2020. I can confirm that the survey has been well designed and administered, and that it is appropriate for the purpose set.

I note the accident rates of the cohort and the comparison with the general performance of new drivers given in the Department of Transport statistics. The results are very favourable and go to the heart of the Pathfinder mission. The comparison provides good evidence that the programme works well. I note alongside this other quantitative and qualitative evidence that testify to the programme's success. In particular, I would select that only one participant (of 81 respondents) reports conviction for a motoring offence and that 12% of respondents have taken an additional driving qualification. Finally, I note further that the quotations from respondents are useful and provide good insights into the value of the course and its potential future development.

In summary, this is an effective survey and supports the case for Pathfinder which remains uniquely important to the safe progress of young people on our roads. I very much hope that Pathfinder programmes continue to thrive and grow. Please keep me informed of progress,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Kawalek".

Professor Peter Kawalek.









**THE UNDER 17 CAR CLUB CHARITABLE TRUST**

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