



**Safer Drivers  
Save Lives**



**“Education is the most powerful weapon  
which you can use to change the world.”**

Nelson Mandela

**#SafeAt17**

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## 1 The Pathfinder Initiative

### 1.1 Introduction

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, typically 5-day, event and brings the Charity's safe driving approach to a wider audience and substantially reduces accidents, risk of injury and driving offences amongst participants.

### 1.2 Summary Outputs

The Pathfinder initiative was established by The Under 17 Car Club in 2008. Reviews of results were undertaken in 2014, 2018 and 2020 and are available for review on the Trust website:

<https://u17ccctrust.org/research/>



In 2022 some 680 past students from all years were invited to take part of whom 38 responded. Those candidates responding are primarily from more recent intakes. This 2022 Survey confirms that Pathfinder delivers substantial benefits to its students when compared with their peer group. Graduates of the Programme, with an aggregate rate of 1 in 19 over 6 surveys, are 4 times safer (7 times safer from 2022 survey) than their peers with an accident rate of only 3% (2022 survey) in the first year post-DVSA test compared against more than 20% nationally.

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

Visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

Furthermore, less than 5% of the students report being convicted of a traffic offence compared to an annual national average of 13.6%.

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

Visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

While the national overall pass rate in 2017/18 for the DVSA test was 46%, Pathfinder Students (2022 survey) achieved a first attempt pass rate of 76% with a further 16% passing on their second attempt.

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

Visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

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 2022 results are a further improvement on those from previous Pathfinder surveys, and those of The Under 17 Car Club. The results of our surveys now span 23 years. While numbers remain small relative to the whole eligible population, the consistency of results across 6 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:

Topic	General Public	Car Club Combined	Pathfinder Survey	
			2014-2022 (aggregate)	Pathfinder Survey 2022
1st Year Accident Rate	1 in 5	1 in 16	1 in 19	1 in 37
DSA 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt Test Pass Rate (All)	46%	79%	63%	76%
Points on Licence	14.30%	4%	2%	5%
IAM/RoSPA	0.50%	9%	2%	5%
Other: Blue Light, Trailer, Good Vehicle			2%	0%

*Figure 1 – Key Metrics from the Pathfinder Project*

The 2018, 2020 and 2022 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).

### 1.3 Key Considerations

Reflecting on the work of 15 years of the Pathfinder Initiative, around 1,500 students and consistent results over multiple surveys, we believe that:

- Under 17 Driver Training in regulated environment reduces collision and incident rates and increases pass rates;
- The reach of the U17CC Trust is necessarily limited and we would encourage Government, public and road safety bodies to support us in providing this opportunity to every child;
- We contend that our approach is evidently more effective than other measures routinely suggested (curfews, age restrictions, etc.);
- Ensuring that the opportunity to participate in Pathfinder can be available to every child will require financial support but the pay back to society and the economy will far outweigh the cost.

Our results 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.

### 1.4 Value for Money

Pathfinder has been running since 2011 in Gloucestershire, West Mercia and Yorkshire. In terms of value for money, there are multiple considerations:

- All labour (in excess of 8,000 hours per annum) is provided by volunteers;
- All funding whether from the parents of participants or public bodies is applied to ensure that nobody is ever excluded from the programme on financial grounds. A number of participants are able to do so for each event without contributing financially;
- High risk and otherwise difficult to reach participants such as those living in care, deprived circumstances and refugees are targeted through the funding available;

- Financial value for money is displaced in time and geography from the events themselves. The participants in Pathfinder are not able to use and test their skills until a year or more after their participation.
- Participation in Pathfinder leads to a substantial likely reduction in the burden on the public purse:
  - Each road deaths cost around £1.9million, each serious injury £218,000:
  - With a cohort of 16 Pathfinder students, statistically only 1 would be involved in a road collision in their first year of driving, at a cost of £155,650 (average cost, all collision severities);
  - For an identical cohort who had not completed Pathfinder, 4 would be involved in a collision;
  - The saving due to Pathfinder is estimated at £233,475, or £14,952 per student compared with a total delivery cost of less than £360 per student.

The Pathfinder Initiative offers extraordinary value for money.

With the financial and practical support provided to Pathfinder by, in particular, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner, West Mercia Police, Gloucestershire Police, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Safer Roads Humber and local groups of IAM Roadsmart, we have been able to offer places to young people who might otherwise be unable to access Pathfinder for reasons of financial, health or family circumstances. More than 50 young people have enjoyed that benefit so far and in 2023 we have already made commitments to more than 20 new candidates from such backgrounds.

### **1.5 Acknowledgements**

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

Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner;  
Gloucestershire Police;  
Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service;  
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner;  
West Mercia Police;  
Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service;  
Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service;  
Safer Roads Humber;



## Participant Survey 2022



Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership;  
Three Counties Showground, Malvern;  
6th Gear Experience, Seighford;  
Tockwith Motorsports Centre, Yorkshire;  
South Cerney Airfield;  
IAM Roadsmart;  
IAM Advanced Driver Groups in Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Yorkshire;  
DHL;  
University College London, Intelligent Mobility Laboratory.

We are particularly grateful to all the adults that bring their own children and, quite often, the children of others to Pathfinder!

None of our work would be possible without the support of our volunteers from across the country. More than 60 people ranging in age from 16 to over 70 engage to deliver our programmes.

This report has been compiled on behalf of the Trust by Dr. John Beckford and Phil Hagen, 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.

## 2 Background to The Pathfinder Initiative

Developed from nearly 50 years' experience through the work of The Under 17 Car Club ([www.under17-carclub.co.uk](http://www.under17-carclub.co.uk)), 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 4-5 day short programme.

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 well over 5,000 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 developed from Roadcraft (the Police Driving Manual) and focus 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 driving practice and theory with key learning on risk-aware attitudes and risk reducing behaviour, and is designed to build knowledge, competence 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 2023 and beyond Pathfinder will be running at least nine events per year coinciding with local school holidays for up to 300 students at venues in Malvern, Worcestershire; South Cerney, Wiltshire; Seighford, Staffordshire; and Tockwith, Yorkshire.

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

### 3 The Pathfinder Survey 2022

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

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

680 past students were eligible to take part, i.e. over 17 and eligible to hold a DVSA driver's licence for at least 12 months at the date of the survey. There has been a substantial disruption to students taking the DVSA test post-Covid which shows in a substantial reduction in responses as students who have not taken a test are unlikely to complete the survey. 38 students in all responded, including one who chose to participate and whose results are included but who have not yet taken the DVSA test. Students have included a number of neuro-divergent candidates 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 whether or not to pursue obtaining a driving licence.

The results of the survey 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;
- facilitate opportunity to participate for young people living in care and those who are neuro-divergent through the organisations supporting and working with them;
- 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 candidate 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. Reports from formal surveys of former members in 2006 and 2012 are available at: [www.u17ccctrust.org](http://www.u17ccctrust.org)

The Club surveys were very extensive, extending to participants' experiences with the Club as well as on the road. It was decided, for the later surveys, to separate these aspects: one focused on internal matters, the other primarily concerned with experience on the road and this has been adopted for the Pathfinder surveys.



Since 2012 we have collected information about the first-year accident rate, a change adopted to bring our results in line with other investigations such as those of the House of Commons Select Transport Committee. That approach has been carried through all subsequent surveys which include all participants aged over 18 and therefore eligible to have been driving on the road for more than one year.

The 2022 and prior Pathfinder Student Survey Questions: <https://under17driver.co.uk/survey/> 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.

In 2020 and 2022 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 680 individuals approached 38 responded (of whom 35 had taken and passed the DVSA test), a response rate of around 6%. We consider this to be a low response rate resulting from limited contact beyond the immediate course and many students have not progressed to DVSA test due to delays caused by COVID responses. We also lose contact with students as email addresses are changed.

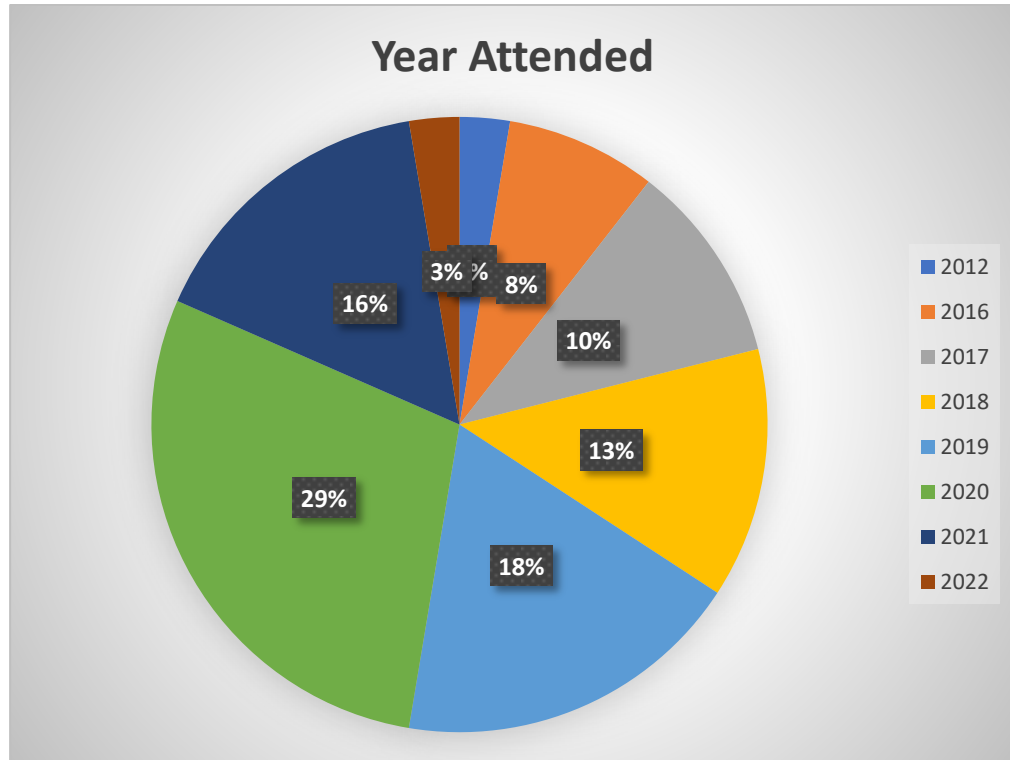


Figure 2 – Year of Attendance for 2022 Survey

42% of those eligible to participate in the survey identified as female with 58% identifying as male. Of those responding to the survey, 39% identified as female and 61% 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.

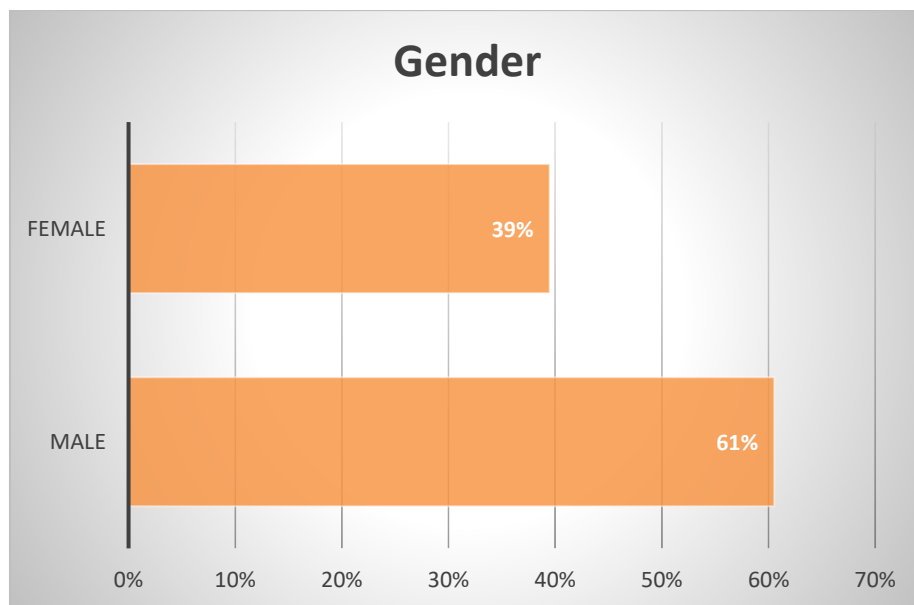


Figure 3 – Gender of 2022 Survey Participants

With 76% of students having been aged 16 at the time they attended:

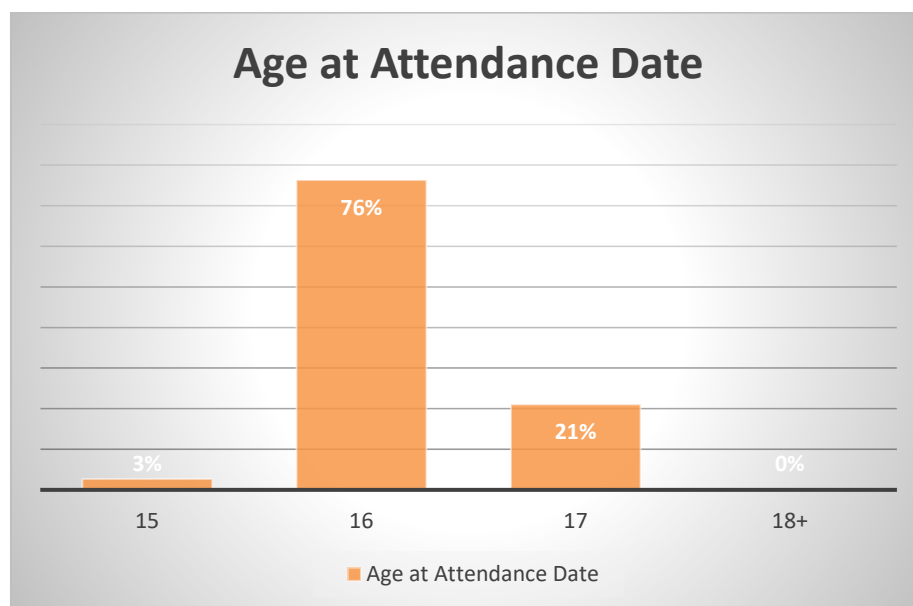


Figure 4 – Age at Attendance of 2022 Survey Participants

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 six 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 23-year period (1999-2022) 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 Survey Key Findings 2022

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.”

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

Visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

### 5.1 Accident Rates

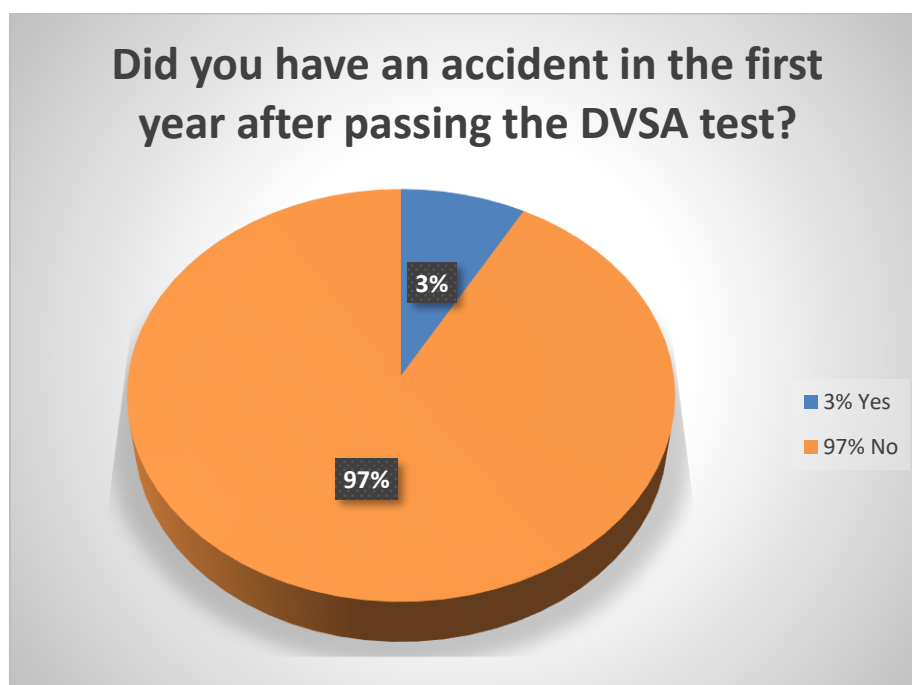


Figure 5 – Accidents in First Year after passing DVSA Test 2022

In the 2022 Pathfinder Survey we have measured “reportable accident rate” for our students in line with Government statistics and it is pleasing to be able to report that the first-year reportable accident rate for Pathfinder participants is less than 3%, 1 in 37. This rate compares very favourably with that of 1 in 5 reported by the Department for Transport\*. 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. Our reporting has been brought in line with this.

\*<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/about/statistics>  
Visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

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.

#### Average Respondent Annual Mileage

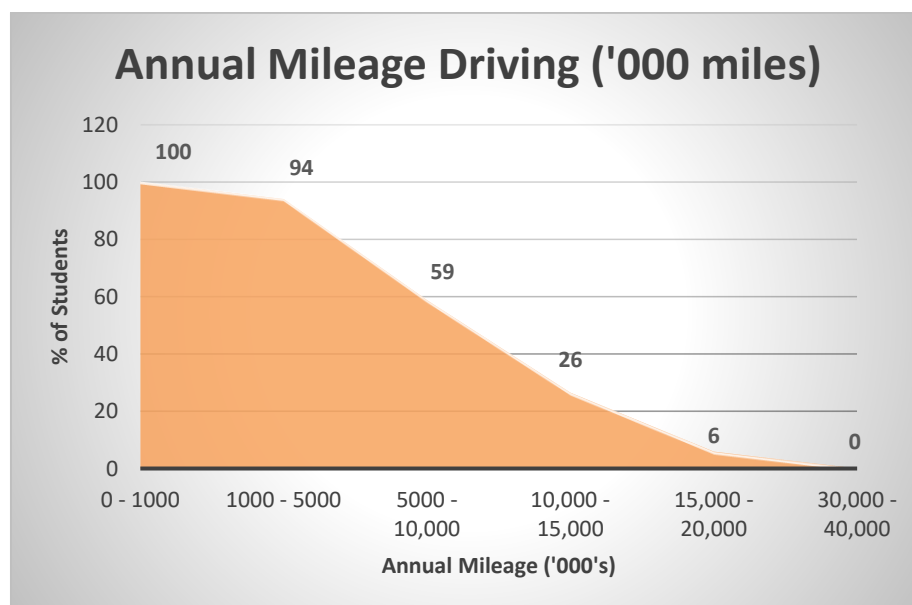


Figure 6 – Annual Mileage for 2022 Survey

The Trust has also been pleased to note that the average mileage being driven by our young drivers after their driving test is broadly consistent with the national averages, with 59% driving over 5,000 miles per annum and 27% over 10,000 miles per annum. This compares to the national average in 2017 of 7,800 miles per annum:

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

Visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020



## Participant Survey 2022



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 Driving Test Performance

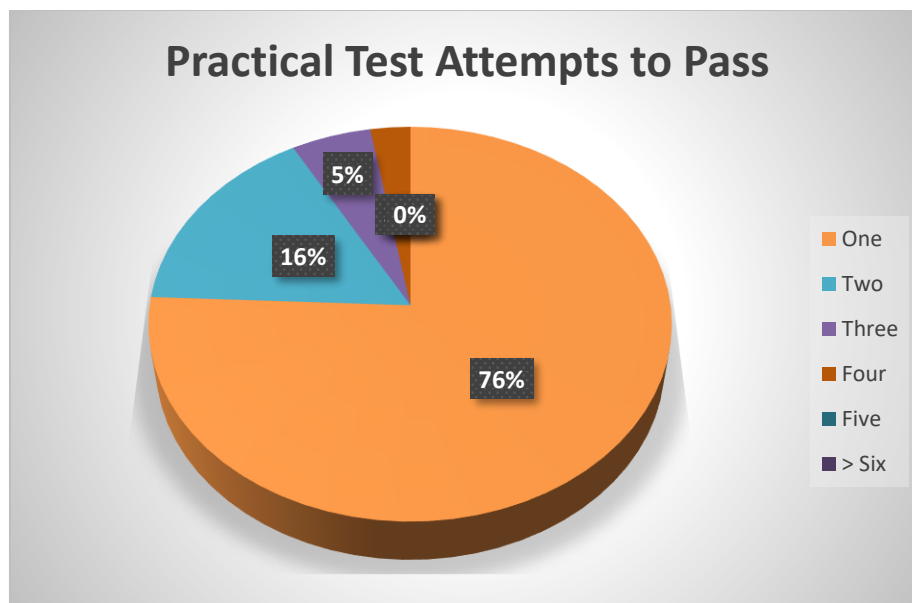


Figure 7 – Practical Driving Test Performance for 2022 Survey

Of the respondents, 76% (62% 2020) passed the DVSA Practical Test at the first attempt while a further 16% (34% 2020) passed at the second attempt, only one had not yet passed their practical test at the time of the survey. The rate of 76% is slightly 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.

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

Visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

### 6.1 Theory /Hazard Test Performance

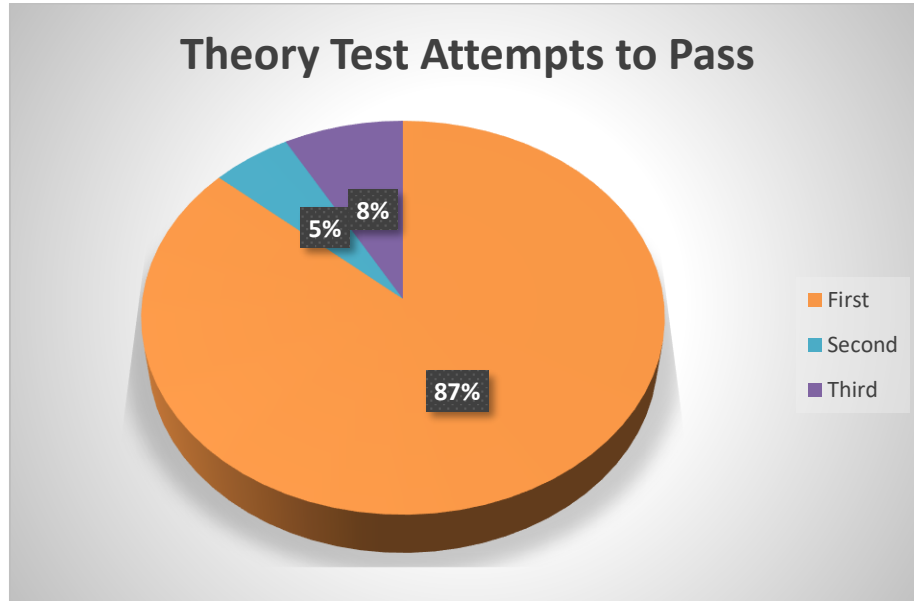


Figure 8 – Driving Theory Test Performance for 2022 Survey

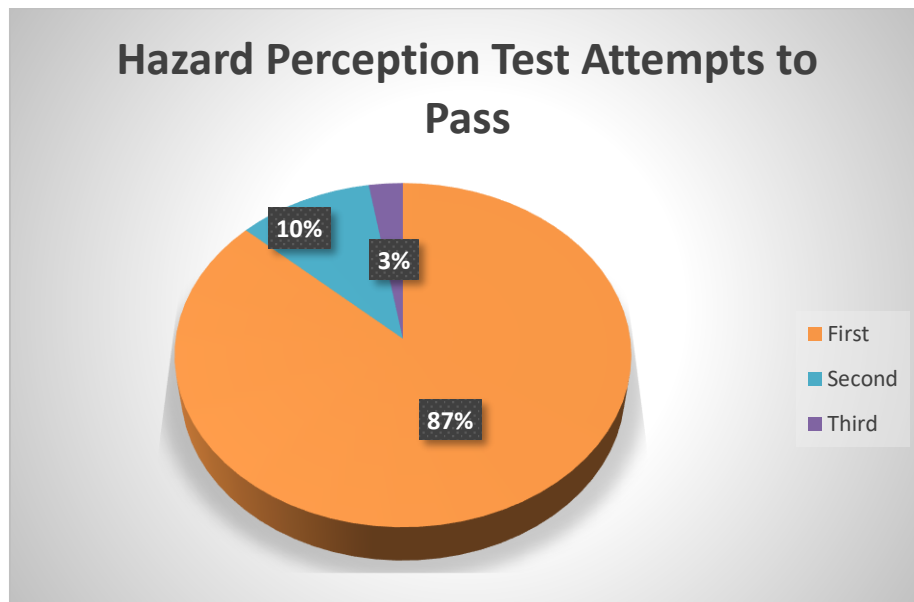


Figure 9 – Driving Hazard Perception Test Performance for 2022 Survey

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 87% versus the national average pass rate of 47.1%\* (2019/20); similarly the Hazard Perception first time pass rate for our respondents is 87% against the estimated national average pass rate of 50%. No Government statistics on this test appear to have been published.

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

Visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

## 6.2 Convictions

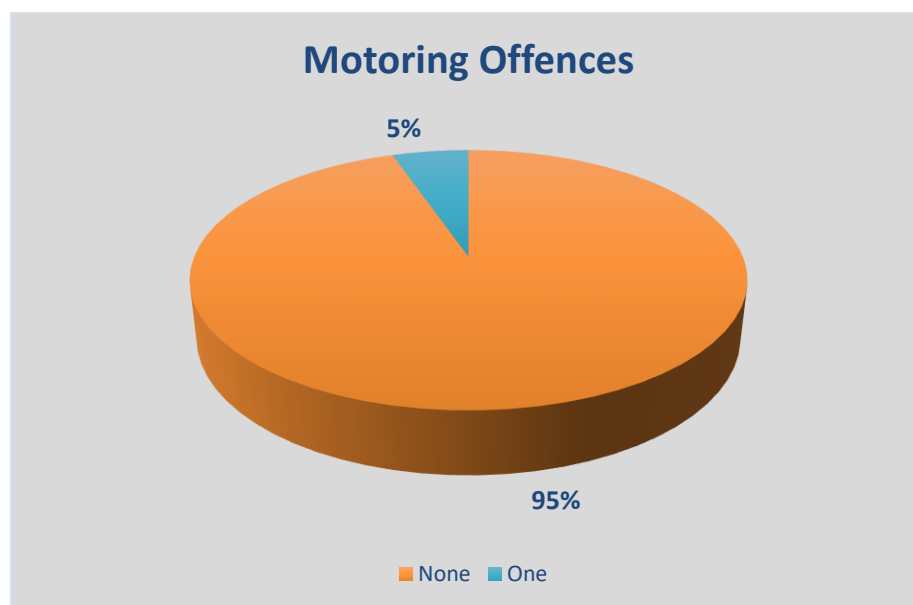


Figure 10 – Drivers with Convictions in 2022 Survey

Of the 38 participants in the survey only two drivers (5%) had been convicted of a traffic offence compared with nearly 24%\*\* of all drivers nationally, and even then only of a single offence.

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

Around 16% of the Respondents had taken an additional driving qualification at the time they completed the survey (including 4 Pass Plus and 2 IAM Roadsmart). 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).

## 6.3 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, many of them living in care or 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. These funds are particularly applied to young people living in supported care or other deprived circumstances aiming to ensure equality of opportunity as best we can.

No young person 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 to receive support from

Traffic Officers from Gloucestershire and West Mercia, Firefighters from Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, Shropshire 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.

#### 6.4 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 all respondents took at least some such lessons as recommended.

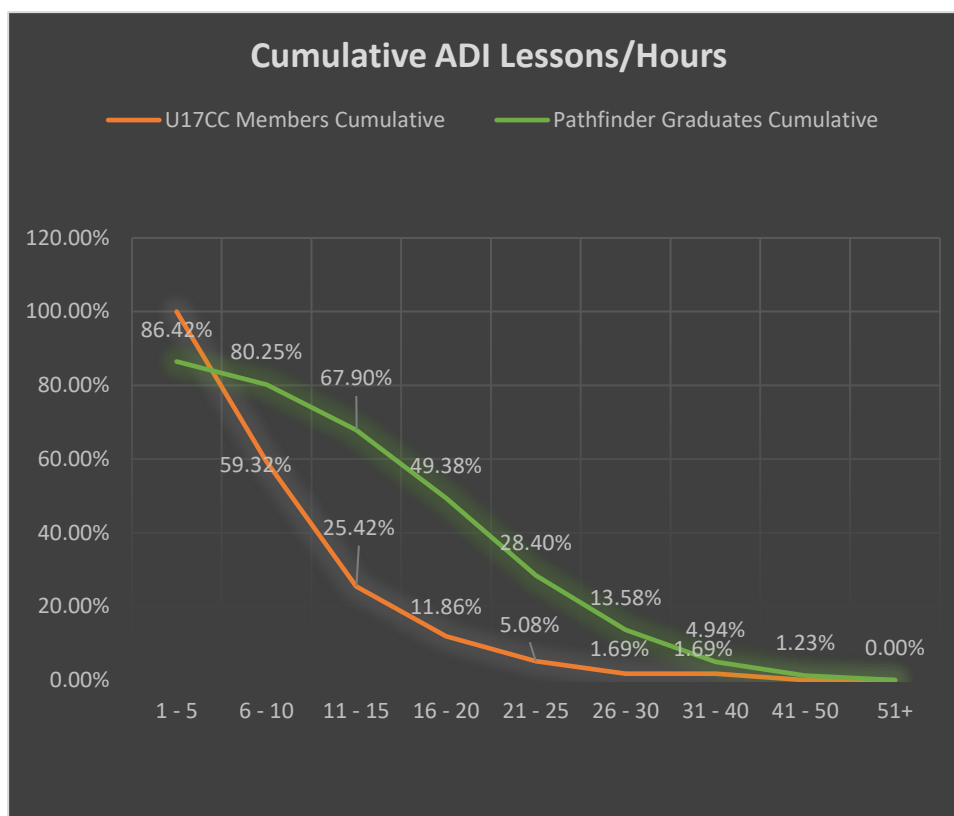


Figure 11 – 2022 Lessons/Hours with ADI prior to passing DVSA Test

As Figure 11 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, 71% 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.

## 6.5 Participant Reflections

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

### **Key Messages:**

100% (91% 2018) of the Respondents stated that the course had been very useful in making them a **better** driver, the remaining 9% considering it useful;

92% (91% 2018) considered it very useful in making them a **safer** driver, the remaining 9% considered it useful;

82% (69% 2018) thought it very useful in making their driving more **enjoyable** with 27% rating it useful;

76% thought the course was excellent with 21% rating it very good and 3% good;

87% (99% 2018) rated the course excellent for money with the remaining 13% (1%) rating it very good.

The rising cost of venues and of addressing Covid restrictions in particular has increased the cost of delivery of Pathfinder with inevitable consequences for pricing. It is notable that cost was listed as a major consideration for between 37% of participants (previously 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 and of course to operate a 'cost-recovery only' pricing model.

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 (previously also 100%) 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.

## 6.6 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:

- Great course, great instructors, excellent experience. Thank you.
- Great course enjoyed by student and parents
- The only issue we had was having to find accommodation for the whole week for the family was expensive. If camping accommodation could be found/ provided, that would be fantastic.
- ALL OF THE INSTRUCTORS WERE AMAZING - VERY PATIENT AND REALLY HELPFUL.
- The course was brilliant - my parents are planning for my sister to do the course too.
- As I live in an area where car crime is very high this gave me a massive leg up to help me do it legally as I wouldn't have been able to afford to take all the lessons to get to the standard that pathfinder got me to in a week brilliant course highly recommended . My mom has taken one of my mates on the course also who had lost his way a bit but now his theory is passed and his test is book . Can't recommended it enough. Thank you.
- The course gave me the confidence to be able to apply everything learned to pass driving test and confidence with driving instructor. Brilliant course, would fully recommend to others.
- The accident was no fault a tourist drove wrong way down one way country lane and wrote off my Jaguar. I was injured by air bags, seatbelt and speed of impact 35mph x2 lucky to walk away.
- Pathfinder course was best thing I did. The only reason I didn't take driving test immediately was because I went on a foreign tour with school. Theory test taken in January.
- Should be compulsory for all learners.
- Everything about the course was excellent, getting to drive different vehicles. My driving instructor afterwards was very impressed with my ability I gain from the course.
- My nerves in an exam environment let me down the first test I made 1 silly mistake, the second test my diabetes impacted on me badly so it was not my

driving skill but nerves and medical reasons for multiple tests. This impacted on the need for more driving instructor lessons and parent hrs I still managed to pass within 3 months of turning 17.

I found the course absolutely brilliant and the support and encouragement I got on the course gave me the confidence to drive with a parent from day 1 of turning 17.

- It's nice to still be involved as a volunteer marshal.



## 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:
  - a. First Aid Training
  - b. Skill Development (close manoeuvres)
  - c. Skid Pan Training
  - d. Speed Awareness Training
  - e. Advanced Car Control (Cornering and Vehicle Dynamics)
  - f. Motorway Training
  - g. Vehicle Safety and Routine Maintenance 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\*), then the potential saving from reducing young driver accident rates from 20% to 6%, as evidenced above, would save the UK economy £472m\*\* per year in addition to avoiding the human cost of losing loved ones.

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

\*\* Based on 337 young driver car fatalities in 2013, being the most recent data we have found. Source:

[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)

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



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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.

## 8 Appendix 1: Background: 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 47 years later and continuing to thrive, The Under 17 Car Club Limited offers the only nationally available, not-for-profit young drivers programme and the Pathfinder Initiative is in its 15<sup>th</sup> year. Since 1976 through the two programmes 6,000 pre-licence drivers and their associates have developed positive attitudes to road safety and high levels of driving skill and there are past Club members who are now associates for their own children. Our curriculum and methodology is 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.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmtran/506/50607.htm#n580>

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2010>



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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.