

# Transport Research Series

Qualitative Research With Young People:  
Road Safety

# **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: ROAD SAFETY**

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **Introduction**

In June 2008, the Scottish Government commissioned ODS Consulting to undertake qualitative research exploring the views of young people (aged 16 to 25) towards road safety. The research was to help inform the development of the new Scottish Road Safety Strategy. Young people – particularly young male drivers – are significantly more likely to be involved in a car accident (Scottish Government, 2008a). Given the high casualty rates among young people, the Scottish Government wished to ensure that the views of young people were taken into account in developing the new Road Safety Strategy.

## **Methodology**

The research took place between June and September 2008. It involved six focus groups with young people aged 16 to 19 and 20 to 25 – four with young men and two with young women. Three groups were held in Glasgow and three in the Scottish Borders. A total of 54 young people participated in the research.

Research participants were identified through recruitment in public places including streets, sports centres and shopping centres; working with local organisations including equalities groups; and networking through young people's clubs and groups. A matrix was used to ensure a mix of young people took part in the study – taking account of driving status, employment status, disability and ethnic origin. Innovative participatory methods were used to conduct the focus groups to ensure that the participants found them engaging and interesting, while also extracting rich qualitative information about views and experiences.

## **Key Findings**

### ***Perception of Risk***

Young drivers rarely thought of the risks to themselves – either of being in an accident or getting caught driving dangerously. They focused strongly on risks for passengers and other road users. Participants had very high levels of trust in their friends and siblings as drivers, believing that they would always drive safely to make sure that the passengers were safe. But participant experiences demonstrate that young drivers and passengers are often putting themselves in risky situations. Very few participants seemed to be aware that young drivers were more likely to be involved in a car accident.

### ***Experience of Drink and Drug Driving***

Participants were very unsure about the legal limit for drinking and driving. Only one participant said that he had definitely driven while over the limit. But other comments suggested that some participants had driven while over or close to the limit without realising it.

There were variations in views on whether it was okay to drink **anything** and drive. Some participants said that it was okay to have a small amount to drink – if you were sure that you could still drive safely.

*“A better driver can drink more – I’ve done it.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

Almost all participants had examples of travelling with a driver who had been drinking, or of friends who had driven while over the alcohol limit. Participants were much more likely to travel with someone who was over the limit if they too had been drinking. Many talked about trust when making the decision whether to travel with someone who had drunk alcohol. Most people trusted their close friends if they said they were safe to drive, but said that they would not get into the car with a ‘friend of a friend’ who had been drinking any alcohol.

Driving under the influence of drugs was generally seen as unacceptable. No-one said that they had taken drugs and driven. But four young men gave examples of friends who had done so – one in a one-off situation, and the others on a regular basis. In some cases, participants appeared to lose confidence talking about the experience of drugs and driving because of the reactions of other participants.

### ***Speeding and Seatbelt Wearing***

Participants felt that speeding was very common and acceptable, particularly on quiet roads and motorways. Motorways were seen as more ‘predictable’ – straighter, less stopping and starting, clear rules for overtaking, entering and exiting the roads, and fewer pedestrians and other hazards. Some young men mentioned that speeding was more acceptable if you know the roads. Being able to ‘handle’ the speed was a common theme.

*“Speeding has been made okay – everyone does it.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old, female, urban)

Most participants said that they wore seatbelts all the time. They generally felt that this was an automatic reflex. In most of the discussion groups there were one or two participants who said that they did not always wear their seatbelt. Passengers (and non-drivers) were least likely to wear their seatbelts, particularly in the back seat. Participants were also influenced by the length of the journey, how many passengers there were, how busy the roads were, who they were with, and whether they had drunk alcohol.

*“If I’ve had a drink I don’t think about my seatbelt.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

*“It’s not that it isn’t ‘cool’. It’s the inconvenience.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

## ***Influences on Behaviour***

Participants had very varied views on the factors that influenced how they behaved as a driver and passenger. A key influence was alcohol and drugs. There was general agreement – among drivers and non-drivers – that alcohol made you “pumped up, cocky and over confident” and that this meant you were likely to drive in an unsafe way. Participants thought that in general alcohol affected young people more than older people, but that this varied depending on the individual. Views on how drugs affected driving behaviour were more varied.

The influence of friends was also a key factor. Drivers said that the main reason that they would not drive dangerously would be fear of injuring friends or relatives as passengers. But the same participants also said that having passengers in the car could make them show off – a characteristic that they associated with poor driving behaviour. There is a clear contradiction here, suggesting that while participants would not want to harm their friends, in reality they can behave in ways that might cause accidents.

The research explored if and how young people said they would try to prevent friends driving in a dangerous manner. Participants were most likely to intervene in dangerous driving behaviour if they could offer a practical solution – like taking the phone call for the driver, or getting a taxi instead of driving. The main reason participants said they would intervene was because they would feel a sense of guilt if an accident occurred and they had not tried to stop it. But a number of participants mentioned that simply saying something about dangerous driving was unlikely to have an impact. Participants also mentioned that it was much easier for drivers to influence passenger behaviour, than vice versa.

*“It’s not easy but I would still say to her to slow down, but I doubt she would listen.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

## ***Tackling Dangerous Driving***

Participants were asked for their views on a series of potential restrictions or interventions specifically for young drivers – including restrictions on carrying passengers, driving at night or drinking alcohol and driving. Overall, participants strongly resisted any suggestion of greater restrictions on younger drivers. They argued that these would be discriminatory and restrictive, and were not sure why young drivers – and not all new drivers – should be targeted. There was particularly strong resistance to measures restricting how young people use their cars, including limits on driving at night or carrying passengers.

*“Why would you be allowed to pass and not be considered safe enough to carry passengers? It doesn’t make sense.”* Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

Only one participant (in a younger male group) mentioned the reasons behind suggestions for restricting younger drivers.



*“You should also look at the statistics that young people are more likely to have an accident and have a lower tolerance to alcohol, so I can see the basis for it.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

But participants did spontaneously suggest some potential measures to increase the safety of all **new** drivers, including making the Pass Plus certificate mandatory or part of the driving test.

*“Pass Plus should be compulsory. That should just be the test.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, rural)

### **Minority of Extreme Views**

In speaking to 54 young participants, we found two participants (friends) with experience of stealing cars, driving without a licence, taking drugs and driving, and driving uninsured. This appears to be related to the neighbourhood the young people live in, and the culture of driving behaviour that exists there.

*“If you’re getting chased when you’re fighting you just go as fast as you can. Even if you go past a school and there’s people about you just swerve to avoid them.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*“Your friend gives you their ID and if you are stopped [by the police] you say you are them.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

### **Changing Views**

The study provided a detailed insight into the attitudes and experiences of young people. The young people involved in the study were very open and honest about their attitudes and experiences. But throughout the groups, participants often changed their minds and contradicted themselves. Often, participants had not thought in detail about these issues before and were just beginning to shape their opinions.

Importantly, some participants expressed certain views but then reported behaviour and experiences that were at odds with these. This was particularly the case in relation to the issues of drinking and driving and peer pressure. Addressing this gap between attitudes and behaviour is a key challenge, and may require further research.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank all of the young people who took the time to take part in this study. Everyone contributed in an enthusiastic, open and honest way, giving us a real insight into the attitudes and experiences of young people.

We would also like to thank the wide range of organisations, groups and individuals that helped us to make links with young people in Glasgow and the Scottish Borders.

Finally, the Advisory Group for the study provided us with valuable advice, support and expertise. Thank you.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### About This Report

1.1 This report sets out findings from qualitative research exploring the views of young people towards road safety. The research focused on young people aged 16 to 25, and what they thought about how to make the roads safer. The Scottish Government commissioned us – ODS Consulting – to undertake this work between June and September 2008. The research findings will help to inform the new Scottish Road Safety Strategy.

### Research Context

1.2 The Scottish Government has five Strategic Objectives – one of which is to develop a ‘safer and stronger’ Scotland. The aim is to help local communities to become stronger and safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life. An important element of this is improving road safety.

1.3 Although road safety has improved in recent years – with a clear reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured – this improvement has not been seen amongst all road users. Amongst young adults, accident rates remain significantly higher than other age groups.

1.4 As Table 1.1 shows, in 2006 young male drivers aged 17 to 22 were most at risk of involvement in a car accident, with 23 to 29 year olds also at considerable risk. Accident rates for young female drivers were also slightly higher than average, but the difference across age groups is not so pronounced for women.

Age	Rates Per Thousand		Number	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
17 – 22	9.7	4.5	1,952	877
23 – 29	7.3	4.6	1,551	984
30 – 59	5.4	3.3	5,661	3,664
60 plus	2.8	0.9	1,331	532
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>10,553</b>	<b>6,072</b>

Source: Scottish Road Accident Statistics 2008, Table 18

1.5 The Scottish Government is currently developing a strategy for improving road safety over the coming ten years. In February 2008 it issued a consultation document (Scottish Government, 2008b) to gather views on future priorities and how these should be addressed. The analysis of the consultation responses was published in July 2008 (Scottish Government, 2008c). The Scottish Government has also set up a Panel of Experts to advise on how to build on good practice and address areas of concern.

1.6 The Scottish Government and Road Safety Scotland are keen to ensure that the strategy is an evidence informed document. Given the high casualty rates among young people, they also wish to ensure that the views and experiences of young people – and particularly young men – are taken into account. Addressing the

high casualty rates in this age group will be essential in improving road safety in Scotland in the future.

1.7 A range of research studies have therefore been commissioned recently to explore the views of young drivers, pre-drivers and non-drivers towards road safety. For example, in 2007 Road Safety Scotland commissioned a study exploring the views of young pre-drivers, to identify attitudes, influences on behaviour, and help with developing advertising and promotional activity (Road Safety Scotland, 2007). The views and experiences of young people have also been explored in wider research on experiences of driving on rural roads (Scottish Government, 2008d), and experiences and attitudes towards drink driving (Scottish Government, 2008e). This research study will contribute to this growing evidence base on young people and road safety.

### **Research Aims and Objectives**

1.8 In June 2008, the Scottish Government commissioned ODS Consulting to hold six focus group discussions with young people. The aim of the research was to explore the views of young people on key road safety issues, including how these issues affect them as passengers, potential drivers and drivers.

1.9 The specific objectives were to:

- gauge what rights and responsibilities young people perceived that they had as road users;
- learn about young people's concerns regarding road safety;
- explore what might motivate young people to be safer road users; and
- find out how much young people were aware of risk on our roads.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### Introduction

2.1 This study involved six focus groups with young people in Scotland. The aim of the focus groups was to explore young people's views on road safety issues. The research was commissioned by the Scottish Government, and overseen by an Advisory Group involving Scottish Government and Road Safety Scotland staff.

### Rationale for Using Focus Groups

2.2 Focus groups involve bringing together a small group of people to discuss an issue. They are particularly useful for in depth exploration of perceptions, attitudes, feelings and opinions, as well as experiences. Generally focus groups follow a broad discussion guide, but are flexible enough to allow discussion of other issues as they arise.

2.3 This approach allowed us to hear about young peoples' personal views and experiences as well as making participation an enjoyable experience. By bringing together peer groups we were able to create a relaxed atmosphere where the participants enjoyed themselves and got something out of attending, more so than would have been possible with other methods – such as individual interviews or surveys. Participative exercises were also used to stimulate discussion amongst the groups of individuals and get as much information out of the participants as possible. The focus group enabled the participants to 'bounce off' one another and debate issues as they arose.

2.4 A limitation of this kind of research exercise is that what participants say they believe and what they say they do, might not necessarily be the same as what they *actually* believe or do. Views and behaviours expressed can be those that participants think they *should* express and can be influenced by the group. The focus groups did however provide the opportunity to probe and explore further what people said. Indeed, as is highlighted later, the research found many examples of participants contradicting themselves.

### Group Characteristics

2.5 In designing the focus groups, we firstly considered three main factors – participant gender, participant age and group location. The research specification gave clear parameters for the study. It was to include six groups of men and women ranging from 16 to 25 years of age, including pre-drivers, drivers and non-drivers, living in both urban and rural locations, and with different driving experiences. It was agreed that the focus groups would be held in Glasgow and the Scottish Borders. This ensured that young people with experience of travelling on different types of roads and in different conditions were included in the study.

2.6 Given the higher accidents rates among young men in comparison with young women, we focussed on exploring the views of men in particular. As a result we held

four discussion groups with men, and two with women. One of the young men's groups was very large, and so was split into two smaller mini-groups for ease of facilitation. Separate groups were held with men and women. This was for four main reasons.

2.7 Firstly, it ensured that women from minority ethnic communities were able to participate. In many cases it would not be culturally appropriate to invite women to mixed groups. By doing this, we were able to engage with two women from a minority ethnic community, and eight men (out of a total of 54 participants).

2.8 Secondly, existing research has shown that accident rates and attitudes can vary considerably between men and women. Same sex groups allowed us to explore slightly different issues with each group, and to compare attitudes between the sexes.

2.9 Thirdly, same sex groups can help with management and facilitation of the discussion groups, particularly among the younger age group. This approach ensured that the discussion was not disrupted by young men showing off in front of women, or vice versa. Finally, given that we wanted to speak to more men than women, it was important that men did not dominate mixed groups.

2.10 The groups were also split by age. The age group covered by the study was large, with significant differences in life experience and maturity. We therefore decided to separate the groups into 16 to 19 year olds, and 20 to 25 year olds – with three focus groups held with each age group.

2.11 Although qualitative research does not aim to be representative, it was important to ensure that a range of people with different experiences and backgrounds were included in the study, in addition to residential location, age and gender. Working with the Advisory Group, a focus group participant profile was agreed, to ensure a good mix of driving status, employment status, ethnic origin and disability.

2.12 A screening survey was completed for each potential participant during recruitment. A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix One. We also recruited people from different locations across Glasgow and the Scottish Borders, with the intention of increasing the socio-economic mix of participants.

2.13 The final matrix of focus group location, age and gender was as follows:

<b>Table 2.1: Focus Group Matrix</b>			
<b>Glasgow</b>		<b>Borders</b>	
16-19 years	Male only*	16-19 years	Male only
20-25 years	Male only	20-25 years	Male only
16-19 years	Female only	20-25 years	Female only

\*This group had 12 attendees, and so was split into two mini groups

## **Recruiting Participants**

2.14 Focus group participants were recruited using a range of methods:

- street recruitment;
- recruitment at retail and leisure centres;
- working with local projects, groups and community centres; and
- networking.

### ***Street recruitment***

2.15 In both Glasgow and the Scottish Borders we went to a number of busy locations and recruited people on the street. Researchers targeted people who were thought to fit the profile (checking age and driving status). Potential participants were told of the nature and purpose of the research. Those who were interested completed the screener survey. Others were given a flier containing information about the focus group and a telephone number to call to register to attend. This method of recruitment was relatively successful, though less so in the smaller towns in the Scottish Borders as it was harder to find people that fitted our profile.

### ***Retail and leisure centres***

2.16 Staff and customers were approached in a range of retail and leisure centres, such as:

- sports and swimming centres;
- sports clubs, including football, golf and rugby clubs;
- shops and retail centres; and
- bars and pubs

2.17 By speaking to staff in these locations face to face, over the telephone or by email, we were able to give them information about the research and the types of people we were looking for. Posters and fliers were left on notice boards, in staff rooms and in sports hall locker rooms and this proved successful for our recruitment.

### ***Local projects, groups and community centres***

2.18 Over 100 organisations in the Scottish Borders were contacted, including youth projects, community centres, young farmers groups, car clubs and dance groups. Although many groups and projects had closed for the summer, we were still able to identify potential participants.

2.19 A number of trusted organisations working with people from equalities groups were also contacted. In Glasgow this included the Big Step, Glasgow Anti Racist Alliance, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, Glasgow Disability Alliance and regeneration agencies across the city.

### ***Networking***

2.20 To further guarantee participants' attendance at the groups, we invited people to bring along a friend. This snowballing approach proved very effective; not only increasing our recruitment but also helping with safety considerations and increasing the likelihood of participant attendance. We screened all friends before the group,

allowing us to target people who met specific criteria, such as drivers or those in education.

### ***Incentives***

2.21 In agreement with the Advisory Group we incentivised attendance at the focus groups with a cash payment of £30. This is common practice when conducting research with the general public. It demonstrates that participant input is highly valued and was in recognition of the fact that the young people had given up valuable time to attend the groups. We also paid travel expenses (and offered to pay childcare and interpretation costs, although this was not taken up by anyone). Light refreshments were offered at the groups.

## **Organising the Focus Groups**

### ***Administration***

2.22 Selected participants were invited to attend the groups. Those selected received written information about the research, along with a free phone number to call with any questions. We sent everyone a 'Let Someone Know Where You Are' card, with the focus group details on it. A few days prior to each focus group, participant attendance was confirmed by telephone or by email.

### ***Venues***

2.23 The groups were held in accessible, public and trusted venues. In Glasgow, we held all three groups in a very central location, next to a train station and well known landmarks. In the Scottish Borders one group was held in Hawick, in the largest public building in the town – the Tower Mill. This was well used by young people, with a cafe and cinema inside. In Galashiels we held two groups, both in the Volunteer Halls. This again was a central and well known venue.

2.24 All six groups were held on a midweek evening. Timings of the groups were discussed with potential participants, and mid-week was considered as the easiest time for most people. Where possible the timings of the groups were organised so that women or young participants were not leaving the venue after dark.

### ***Pilot group***

2.25 Our first group in Glasgow acted as a pilot group. This was to test out the discussion guide in terms of length and clarity, and to test the recruitment methods. This group was conducted with 16 to 19 year old women. This group was very well attended (with 14 participants). Following this group some small changes were made to the discussion guide (such as including a second set of interactive statements with sticky dots).



## Final Participant Numbers and Mix

2.26 Focus groups are traditionally composed of between 8 and 10 people. This number of participants ensures a manageable discussion and allows everyone to have their say. To achieve this, we originally proposed to invite around 20 participants (working on the basis that we would need to invite at least twice as many participants to guarantee ten people). Fifteen participants were invited to the pilot group in Glasgow, of whom 14 attended. As a result, we decreased the number of invitees for subsequent groups. In total, 54 young people participated in this study. Given the intention of engaging on a small scale to explore views qualitatively, these numbers are reasonable.

Table 2.2 below sets out the profile of participants attending the groups.

<b>Table 2.2: Participant Profile</b>					
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Age</b>		<b>Location</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>16-19</b>	<b>20-25</b>	<b>Glasgow</b>	<b>Borders</b>	
Male	19	13	20	12	32
Female	14	8	14	8	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Participant Driving Status</b>					
	<b>16-19</b>	<b>20-25</b>	<b>Glasgow</b>	<b>Borders</b>	
Driver	13	14	8	15	23
Non-driver*	20	7	26	5	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Participant Occupational Status</b>					
	<b>16-19</b>	<b>20-25</b>	<b>Glasgow</b>	<b>Borders</b>	
Employment	5	12	8	9	17
Education	24	8	22	10	32
NEET**	4	1	4	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>54</b>

\*Includes learner drivers \*\*Not in education, training or employment

2.27 Overall, 32 participants were male, and 22 female. Attendance at the urban groups was slightly higher. It was slightly more difficult to identify males aged 20 to 25 willing to participate in the study and we experienced slightly higher last minute cancellation levels for this age group and gender. The bad weather was also a factor in the lower attendance in the Scottish Borders.

2.28 Overall, across the six groups, just under half (23) were drivers. In agreement with the Advisory Group, only participants who had passed their driving test and held a full driving licence were classed as 'drivers'. This meant that pre-drivers, non-drivers and learners were all classed as 'non-drivers'. For the purpose of this document participants who stated they were driving illegally are also identified as 'non drivers'.

2.29 There were far more drivers in the rural focus groups than the urban groups. This may in part reflect that in rural areas being able to drive is a key route to independence. It could also be influenced by the fact that regardless of where focus groups were held in the Scottish Borders, getting places by public transport is extremely difficult. Drivers may therefore have found it easier to attend the groups than non-drivers.

2.30 Thirty two attendees were in education, 17 were in employment and five were not in employment, education or training. Participants were recruited from different parts of Glasgow and the Scottish Borders, to include participants from different areas of deprivation.

2.31 There was some fluidity in the way participants described their occupational status. For example, many of the participants who said that they were in education were working over the summer. Some participants who were not in employment, training or education had just left school or college, while others had been in this situation for longer.

2.32 Our aim was to ensure that at least ten per cent of participants were from a minority ethnic community. The 2001 Census categories were used to define this, including people from any background other than White Scottish, Welsh, English or Northern Irish as from a minority ethnic community. A total of eight participants (15%) identified themselves as being from a minority ethnic community:

- 4 were Pakistani;
- 2 were Indian;
- 1 was of other South Asian origin; and
- 1 chose to identify by her faith (Muslim) rather than ethnic origin.

2.33 All of the participants from a minority ethnic community attended the Glasgow focus groups. The size of the minority ethnic population in the Scottish Borders is very small – at 2.5 per cent at the time of the 2001 Census.

2.34 Despite targeted recruitment – working with local disability organisations and groups in both Glasgow and the Scottish Borders – it was difficult to identify potential disabled participants. Only one participant said that they considered themselves to be disabled. Two participants indicated they had dyslexia, but would not define themselves as disabled.

## **Focus Group Format**

### ***Length of groups***

2.35 Each focus group lasted 90 minutes. This allowed time to explore the issues in depth without participants becoming less focused or disengaged. At least two researchers attended each focus group – one to facilitate the group, and one to act as a scribe. With permission from participants, all groups were audio recorded.

### ***Discussion guide***

2.36 A discussion guide was developed and agreed with the Advisory Group. This explored attitudes to road safety, personal experiences, influences on behaviour and rights and responsibilities. It focused strongly on the key issues of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, speeding, seatbelt wearing, mobile phones, tiredness and policing. A copy of the discussion guide can be found at Appendix 2.

### ***Informed consent***

2.37 All our focus groups are conducted according to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. It was important to ensure that all participants were at ease and fully aware of the research and why they had been invited to participate. At the start of each group, we advised participants:

- who we were;
- the purpose of the research and how their views would be used;
- that participation was voluntary and that all comments would be anonymous;
- how their views would be recorded; and
- that we would give them feedback on our findings.

2.38 None of the participants raised any queries about the research and all agreed to the groups being audio recorded.

2.39 A researcher was available at the venue one hour before the start of the group in case any parents or guardians wanted to discuss the research in advance. The researchers could also be contacted by mobile phone on the night of the group. Very few telephone calls were made – those that were tended to be to confirm directions.

### ***Participative techniques***

2.40 The focus groups were conducted using several different consultation techniques. To make sure that the groups were engaging, interesting and fun, with participants contributing as much as possible, we used a number of techniques:

- **Responses to statements** – Participants were asked to show their level of agreement of different statements using sticky dots. Drivers and non-drivers used different coloured sticky dots so that we could analyse any differences in their responses. This exercise also allowed the participants to get up from their seats, interact and walk about in the room. Wherever this exercise was used, respondents were asked to choose between four response categories – strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.
- **Buzz groups** – On several occasions the group was divided into smaller groups, including driver/non-driver groups and groups charged with discussing particular issues. The participants then fed back to the whole group.
- **Prioritisation** – As a whole, the groups were asked to prioritise different influences on driving behaviour that they had identified. This encouraged debate and discussion in the group.
- **Scenarios** – Participants were asked to imagine what they would do in different situations. Discussion focused on if and how participants would stop friends acting in dangerous ways while driving or as a passenger. This was also the basis for further discussion around these issues.

2.41 Participants appeared to enjoy the groups, with some contacting us afterwards keen to be involved in future similar discussions.

*“That was very illuminating... it made me think.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

*“Had a great time last night, and found it very interesting to hear the opinions of others, thank you for the opportunity.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

### **Analysing the Focus Group Findings**

2.42 Following each of the focus groups, the scribe completed a write up of the group, complete with quotes, drawing on the audio recordings, notes made during the focus groups and other material collected at the time. The scribe and facilitator from each focus group discussed the write-ups to ensure that they fully captured the discussions.

2.43 Key themes were identified via manual thematic analysis. Once all six focus groups were completed, a summary document was produced bringing together all the key themes as a basis for discussion among the facilitators and scribes who attended the groups. A discussion session took place among the researchers to ensure that all the key themes emerging from the groups were covered. Further analysis included exploration of the findings across a range of factors, including driving status, age, gender and location and linkages across themes.

### **Notes on the Findings**

2.44 The following chapters present the key findings from the six focus group discussions. Verbatim quotes are included to illustrate key points. The focus groups provided a very detailed insight into the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of young people. But given that this was a small scale study, the findings cannot be extrapolated to the younger population as a whole.

2.45 Where appropriate, we have highlighted variations in findings based on driving status, age, gender and/or location. But again, given the small numbers, these should be interpreted with care.

2.46 Throughout the report, quotes are identified as from ‘drivers’ or ‘non-drivers’. ‘Non-drivers’ included anyone who did not hold a full driving licence – including learner drivers and people who drove illegally. Therefore, many ‘non-drivers’ actually had quite significant experience of driving.

2.47 Finally, throughout the discussion, participants frequently contradicted themselves or changed their minds. Often, participants had not thought in detail about these issues before, and were just beginning to shape their opinions. The views of 16 to 19 year olds were particularly fluid, and participants in this group were more likely to change their minds based on what others said.

### 3. ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES

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#### Introduction

3.1 All of the focus groups opened with a short session exploring participant attitudes to road safety, and what makes a good driver and a good passenger. These sessions were managed through short discussions in small buzz groups, followed by feedback to the whole group. This allowed us to gather important and relevant information, while easing participants into the group with some relatively simple, broad questions.

3.2 We then moved on to detailed exploration of participant attitudes and experiences of road use as a driver and as a passenger. This included detailed discussions on driving after drinking alcohol or taking drugs; seatbelt wearing; speeding; using mobile phones while driving; tiredness; and urban and rural roads. This section sets out our findings from the focus groups on these issues.

#### General Views on Road Safety

3.3 We opened by asking participants what thoughts, associations and images spring to mind when thinking about 'road safety'. The main associations were:

Traffic signals, signs and road markings	Police enforcement, speed limits and speed cameras
How to cross the road	Cycling
Driving habits	Drink driving
Basic driving rules	School children

3.4 The 16 to 19 year olds tended to associate road safety more with physical road design and crossing the road. They also thought more immediately of safety as a pedestrian or cyclist, rather than as a driver. The 20 to 25 year olds tended to make more and wider ranging suggestions – including mentioning driving habits, attitudes to driving and drink driving. This may reflect the fact that there were more drivers in the older groups. Non-drivers were more likely to focus on road safety as a pedestrian, while drivers focused on driving behaviour.

*"It's everything – from traffic lights to seatbelts."* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

#### What Makes a Good Driver?

3.5 The participants identified a wide variety of factors which make a good driver. These are listed below in Table 3.2.

<b>Table 3.2: A good driver:</b>	
Is careful	Is observant and aware
Is courteous and patient	Is relaxed, calm and focused
Has good reactions	Is able to control their vehicle
Has common sense	Is not over cautious or over confident
Keeps an average speed	Doesn't mess about
Isn't a boy racer	Thinks of possible outcomes before they happen

3.6 The most commonly mentioned factors related to being calm, focused, careful, thoughtful and aware. This reflects the findings of other research (Department for Transport, 2007 and 2008, and Road Safety Scotland, 2007).

3.7 Participants also mentioned that a good driver knows and obeys the law. Participants in one group of young men (16 to 19) mentioned that a good driver looks after their car through maintaining it – for example checking the oil. Young women in both groups said that a good driver looks after their passengers, for example by thinking about their safety and telling them to wear their seatbelts. Fewer young men mentioned this. Drivers, rather than non-drivers, tended to say that passenger safety was important.

3.8 A small number of participants mentioned that past experiences can make you into a good driver. For example, one young man felt that having a bad experience (such as crashing your car) could make you into a better driver.

*“I crashed my car when I was younger and it made me a better driver... just being so much more aware, the fact that anything can come out of nowhere.”*  
(Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

3.9 Participants in three groups (all aged 16 to 19) mentioned that using indicators was a sign of good driving. Four young men in one group (aged 16 to 19) all agreed that a bad driver was one who shows off, speeds, takes drugs or drinks, drives without insurance or a licence, or drives stolen cars. Young women (20 to 25) agreed that a bad driver shows off, is immature, speeds and overtakes ‘stupidly’.

3.10 Participants sometimes linked good driving to age. Bad drivers were sometimes seen as immature. A minority of participants expressed awareness that younger people were more likely to be involved in a road accident than older people – generally through hearing about this in the news. But most participants thought that being a good driver was not linked to age.

*“Just because you’ve been driving for ages doesn’t mean you can drive.”*  
(Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

### **What Makes a Good Passenger?**

3.11 There was a high level of agreement on what made a good passenger. A good passenger was seen as someone who was calm and did not distract the driver, while also occasionally providing help – for example through acting as a ‘second eye’ or helping with directions. A minority of participants mentioned that good

passengers should always wear their seatbelt, and should tell the driver if they were driving badly.

Doesn't stress or distract the driver	Doesn't interfere
Is quiet and calm	Has a basic knowledge of driving
Isn't a back seat driver	Acts as a second eye
Doesn't pass on their own bad habits	Is helpful – with maps and so on
Trusts the driver	Would tell the driver if they drove badly
Always wears their seatbelt	Looks after kids in the car
Doesn't fiddle with things	Doesn't change the music

3.12 There was some debate about how much help a passenger should provide. While most participants said that a good passenger is helpful, both drivers and non-drivers agreed that passengers should not interfere too much or act as a 'back seat driver'.

*"I hate back seat drivers. It adds frustration."* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

*"It's good to have a second eye, in case you miss something."* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.13 We also discussed whether the drivers felt safer when driving, or as a passenger. Almost all of the drivers felt that they were safer when driving themselves, rather than when travelling as a passenger. Overall, the women felt slightly less strongly about this than the men.

### **Drinking Alcohol, Taking Drugs and Driving**

3.14 At each group, a considerable proportion of time was dedicated to discussing experiences and views on taking alcohol or drugs and driving. Participants generally found this an interesting issue, and had lots of say. More on experiences and views is set out below.

#### ***Acceptable limits for drinking alcohol and driving***

3.15 Many participants were very unsure about the legal limits for drinking alcohol and driving and about how long alcohol takes to leave your system. We asked everyone whether they thought that it was safe to drive after two drinks. The vast majority of participants – in all of the focus groups – disagreed.

3.16 There were variations in views on whether it was okay to drink **anything** and drive. Some participants said that it was okay to have a small amount to drink – if you were sure that you could still drive safely.

*"A better driver can drink more – I've done it"* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

*"I don't think my reactions would be influenced at all if I had two drinks"*  
(Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.17 Some felt that it was okay to drive if there was a sufficient time lapse between drinking and driving a car:

*“I wouldn’t judge it on how I felt; I’d judge it on time”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

3.18 Many participants said that how much you have had to eat could affect how you cope with alcohol, as well as your weight. There was a common view among young men that larger men were better able to cope with alcohol than smaller women. One participant said that young people tended to drink to get drunk and that there was not much point in taking the risk of just having one drink and driving.

3.19 Others said that it was not worth it:

*“It’s so unnecessary. For the sake of one drink why risk having an accident”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*“As a rule I wouldn’t drive if I had had anything to drink”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, rural)

*“I wouldn’t risk having one drink. Even if I’ve been drinking the night before I’ll walk to work in the morning.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

### ***Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol***

3.20 Initially, when the topic of driving over the alcohol limit, or under the influence of drugs was raised in each group, most participants said that it was something that they would never do. The young people all said that they would never drive when over the alcohol limit. The only exception was in an emergency situation – for example if a family member was very ill.

3.21 Only one participant said that he had knowingly driven while over the limit. Again, this may be due to participant confusion about what the legal limit is. Many participants did give examples of driving after drinking some alcohol, and their stories suggest that some may have been over the limit. In addition, participants may not have wanted to admit to this type of behaviour, even though we emphasised the anonymity of the groups.

3.22 The participant who did admit to driving over the legal limit said that it had been in an emergency situation. He was in a pub and had heard that a family member did not have much time to live. He had driven a couple of miles to the hospital and talked about his experiences:

*“My mum and dad knew I did it and were really unhappy. They said I could have ruined some other family’s life. I could have veered off and killed a kid... I don’t think I should have done it now, but you have to be in that situation where you have to make the choice.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)



3.23 The same participant said that he believed that he had regularly driven when over the limit on the morning after a night out, particularly on a Sunday morning.

### ***Travelling With a Driver Under the Influence of Alcohol***

3.24 Although only one participant said that he had driven while over the limit, most participants had examples of friends who had done so.

*“I know some people who have done it, and then when they’re sober they’re full of regret and cannae believe they done it.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

*“I know a guy who could hardly walk and he drove from St Boswell’s to Gala(shiels). I don’t know how he wasn’t in an accident. He was maybe just lucky.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.25 We asked participants whether they would get into a car driven by someone who had been drinking, as long as it was not too much. Over half said that they would not. Drivers were much less likely to do so than non-drivers. A very small minority of participants mentioned that they would be more likely to travel with a friend who had been drinking if this was their only way of getting home:

*“I’d get in if it was convenient.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.26 But as part of the broader discussion, many participants had examples of travelling in the car with a driver who was over the limit. Other research has also found this (Road Safety Scotland, 2007). Participants were much more likely to get into a car with a driver who was over the legal limit if they themselves had been drinking. This was a particular issue raised by participants in the focus groups in the Scottish Borders.

*“If my mate’s drunk and I’m drunk, I’d probably get in – but not if I’m sober.”*  
(Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

*“I wouldn’t get in the car with someone who was over the limit – but I have before when I was drunk.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

*“I was in a car with someone who had been drinking – I had too so didn’t realise.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

3.27 In the focus groups in Glasgow, the participants tended to give examples of being in the car with someone who had had one drink, but was not “off their face”. The young people in the 16 to 19 year old age group often mentioned they had been in the car with their parents after they had an alcoholic drink.

3.28 Many participants talked about trust when making the decision whether to travel with someone who had taken alcohol (or drugs). Many mentioned that they would not get into the car with a stranger or friend of a friend who had been drinking alcohol – but they may do so if it was a friend or sibling.

*“You wouldn’t go with someone you didn’t know – like a mate’s mate – but it’s okay if you trust the person. It’s all about trust.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*“If it was a mate and he’d had about 3 pints then I’d probably get in.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.29 Many said that if they knew the driver well, they were more confident that they would make a sensible decision about whether they were able to drive. And they felt that it was easier to ask your friend if they felt safe to drive.

*“You can just ask, like ‘are you mad wi’ it?’ and they’ll tell you. If it’s your friend.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*“If you know someone well enough to get in the car with them you should be able to ask them.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

3.30 Many participants believed strongly that drivers cared about their passengers and would not put them in danger.

*“It’s his little brother – he’s not going to drive dangerously if his brother’s in the car”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

3.31 Others mentioned the distance to be travelled and the perceived risk to others:

*“I have got in the car when the driver is drunk. But not for any distance”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

*“My friend drove 1½ miles down his drive when drunk. There was no real risk. He drove it every day and there was no-one else around”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.32 Overall, almost everybody in all six groups had examples of either travelling in a car with a driver who had been drinking some alcohol, or friends who had driven while over the limit.

### ***Taking Drugs and Driving***

3.33 We asked participants a deliberately provocative question about whether they thought ‘taking drugs and driving was okay, as long as you don’t get caught’. Very few agreed with this. The 16 to 19 year old men attending the rural focus group were the most likely to agree. But, on discussion this group said that they felt it was only okay to take prescription drugs and medicines, but not illegal drugs.

*“Taking drugs and driving isn’t okay – it’s obvious.”* (Non-driver, 16-19 year old, male, urban)

*“If you can’t walk or open your eyes why would you be able to drive?”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

*“The effects of drugs can linger – you don’t know how long they are in your system.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

3.34 Many participants said that it depended on the kind of drugs.

*“Cannabis is less of an issue but you still shouldn’t get in a car.”* (Non-driver, 16-19 year old, male, urban)

*“If you mean coke or heroin, I don’t think so but if it’s just smoking...”*(Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, rural)

*“I don’t agree with a joint, it’s a hallucinogenic it makes you more laid back.”*  
(Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

3.35 No-one said that they had taken drugs and driven. But four young men gave examples of friends who had done so – three at a Glasgow focus group, and one at a Scottish Borders group.

3.36 One of the four gave an example of this happening on only one occasion:

*“We went to someone’s house and smoked a few joints. We waited ages and then my girlfriend drove home. She was fine but then she panicked because she couldn’t see the road at all. We almost crashed.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.37 This young man said that he and his girlfriend had believed that they had waited long enough for the drugs to be out of her system. But with hindsight they realised that the effects of drugs can be much longer lasting than they expected.

3.38 The other three young men (all aged 16 to 19, and in the same group) gave examples of regularly and knowingly travelling in a car with drivers who had taken drugs. Two of them (who were friends) stated that in their area, lots of people took drugs (mostly skunk – a strong form of cannabis) and drove. This was often because people did not drink for religious reasons, and drugs were more common.

*“People in our area often chill out, have skunk in their car and just drive around the same place.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*“I’ve seen people just smoke all night and drive around the area.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

3.39 Another man in the same age group regularly travelled with his brother when he had taken drugs. Although he knew it was not good to take drugs and drive, he still felt relatively safe because it was his big brother whom he trusted. But others had a totally different view on taking drugs and driving – seeing it as totally unacceptable.

*“If I thought the driver was on drugs I’d get out of the car at the first chance.”*  
(Non-driver, 16-19 year old, male, urban)

3.40 Generally drinking and driving was seen as more acceptable than taking drugs and driving. Overall, the young men had far more to say on this topic than the women. In some cases, participants appeared to lose confidence talking about experience of drugs and driving because of the reactions of other participants. In the future, this issue may be best explored in smaller groups or individual interviews.

### Seatbelt Wearing

3.41 We asked participants whether they always wore their seatbelt, or if it depended on who they were with. Almost one quarter of participants (12) said that they did not always wear their seatbelt. Non-drivers were much less likely to always wear their seatbelt than drivers. Male participants and those in the Glasgow focus groups were also less likely to wear their seatbelt at all times.

3.42 The majority of participants said that they wore seatbelts all of the time when travelling in a car. They felt that this was an automatic reflex, something that they always do.

*“I’d feel naked without a seatbelt, even just moving the car a few feet.”*  
(Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

*“Young people are more likely to wear a seatbelt. Parents are less likely as they didn’t always have to do it.”*  
(Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

3.43 Some participants were also influenced by television adverts and experiences of friends.

*“I know someone who broke his nose on the front seat because his friend crashed. They were only going at 30.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

3.44 Participants were not always influenced by the experiences of friends who were injured because of not wearing their seatbelt. For example, the young man who told us this story still did not always wear his seatbelt.

*“There was a boy from Gala[shields] and he went through the window because he didn’t wear his seatbelt. Now he’s brain dead.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.45 In most of the groups there were one or two participants who said that they did not always wear their seatbelt. Four (three young women and a man) mentioned that they would sometimes put their seatbelt on, but then take it behind their back instead of across the chest.

*“I think wearing a seatbelt’s about my own safety and I think it’s a hassle. I have been stopped by the police so I’ve been putting it on more recently. I feel claustrophobic when I wear it.”* (Driver, 20 to 25, female, rural)

*“If it’s going to be a fuss to put it on you just don’t.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.46 Generally the participants who did not always wear their seatbelt were less likely to wear it in the back seat than the front.

*“If my three mates are in the back seat, they’re all big guys, sometimes it can just be a hassle... it can irritate you.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.47 It also depended on how long the journey was, how many passengers there were, how busy the roads were, who they were with and if they had drunk alcohol.

*“If I was just going round the corner I wouldn’t put one on.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, female, urban)

*“I don’t wear it in Hawick because there are less folk and so there’s less chance of crashing, but I would if it was like Hawick to Galashiels.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, rural)

*“If I’ve had a drink I don’t think about my seatbelt.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.48 The reason for not wearing a seatbelt clearly seemed to be hassle, and size of the car or number of passengers. It did not seem to be about image for this age group.

*“It’s not that it isn’t ‘cool’. It’s the inconvenience.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

3.49 Although one young man in the 20 to 25 age group thought that teenagers often did not wear their seatbelt due to image, this was not backed up in our discussions with 16 to 19 year olds.

3.50 Many participants mentioned that they did not wear their seat belt in a taxi. Even some of the participants who had previously said that they always wore their seatbelt said that they did not wear it in a taxi. Some said they had not really thought about why this was before, but said it was just what they were used to.

3.51 In a similar vein, participants also talked a lot about trusting the driver. If the driver had a reputation of being involved in crashes, participants would be more likely to put their seatbelt on. But others disagreed with this:

*“It’s often not to do with the driver’s experience but about other ‘nutters’ on the road – so you need to put the belt on.”*

3.52 We asked participants whether they checked that others wear their seatbelt in the car. Just over half of all participants said that they did check. There were a number of very clear trends:

- drivers were much more likely to check than non-drivers;

- participants in rural areas (who were mainly drivers) were more likely to check than those in urban areas; and
- young women were slightly more likely to check than young men.

3.53 Drivers said that they would always check whether children had their seatbelts on, but there were mixed views about whether they would check adults. This was often because the driver had a sense of responsibility towards children – and could also get fined. Some drivers thought that they could get fined even if their passenger was older.

*“I have a young sister and I always tell her to put it on.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

*“I would tell passengers to put their seatbelts on. It’s the driver who gets fined at the end of the day.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

3.54 A minority of drivers said that they did not always check.

*“I don’t know if I always think about it – I’m more caught up in what I’m doing when I’m driving.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

3.55 Non-drivers were much less likely to check if others were wearing a seatbelt, and were more likely to not wear a seatbelt themselves. Some participants mentioned that their parents always check, and this encouraged them to put their seatbelt on.

*“If someone encourages you to do it, you do it.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

## **Speeding**

3.56 Most young people thought that speeding was very common.

*“Everyone does it. I don’t know a single person who drives at 30mph. Even my mum, she’s a driving instructor.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25, male, urban)

*“Speeding has been made okay – everyone does it.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old, female, urban)

*“You should never speed, but you can’t help it. Sometimes the speed limit is 30 and there is no need for it.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old, female, urban)

3.57 Almost everyone said that it was more acceptable to speed on a quiet road or a road where there were no pedestrians.

*“The only roads where it’s not okay to speed is where kids are – built up areas.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

3.58 Many participants thought that it was okay to speed on motorways, which were seen as more ‘predictable’ – in that they are straighter, there is less stopping

and starting, there are clear rules for overtaking, entering and exiting the road, and there are fewer pedestrians and other hazards.

*“I was on the M6 at 3am and there was no-one else there. I was the only person in the car. What harm is it to go fast?”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.59 Some young men also felt that there was a difference depending on how well you know the roads, and the type of car you are in. Being able to ‘handle’ the speed was a common theme:

*“It depends how well you know the roads. Around here you know you can handle it.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.60 Generally participants seemed to think that it was okay to go at around 80 (up to 90) miles an hour on a motorway, and between 60 and 70 on rural roads.

3.61 Four 16 to 19 year old men had very different views on speeding – related to stealing cars. This was the same group that talked about drivers commonly taking drugs and driving. The discussion was dominated by two young men who clearly had experience of travelling in and driving stolen cars. They said that they would go very fast in a stolen car:

*“It’s not your car so you’re not bothered about damaging it.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

3.62 These young men said that people often went too fast if they were fighting with another group of guys.

*“If you’re getting chased when you’re fighting you just go as fast as you can. Even if you go past a school and there’s people about you just swerve to avoid them.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

3.63 Speed cameras were not seen as much of a deterrent – only slowing you down for a short while. But all of the 20 to 25 year old men at the rural discussion group had very strong views on speed cameras. They said that having speed cameras on straight bits of the road meant that people got frustrated – and did dangerous things like overtaking on corners.

### **Mobile Phones and Driving**

3.64 There were very varied views on whether it was okay to use your mobile phone while driving. There was no clear agreement between research participants on this issue.

*“Talking on the phone is not a big deal. It’s just like talking to a mate.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

*“I never answer my phone; never pick it up.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

## Tiredness

3.65 Tiredness was not often mentioned as a major influence on how young people drive. A few participants mentioned that exhaustion could make them drive more dangerously. We asked participants whether as a driver they would stop if they were tired, or keep going. Very few participants said that they would stop.

3.66 When travelling as a passenger, participants had a very high degree of trust that if their friend said they were not too tired to drive they would be safe. The issue of tiredness and how driving when tired could be prevented is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 (paragraph 4.48).

## Urban and Rural Roads

3.67 We asked participants whether they thought that roads in town were more dangerous than roads in the country. Overall, around two thirds of participants thought that rural roads were more dangerous. Participants attending the Glasgow focus groups tended to think that rural roads were more dangerous – but there was a lot of disagreement and discussion around this in both areas.

3.68 Some participants thought that country roads were safer because they are quieter. Many felt that in town there was a much higher volume of traffic, and that this resulted in more accidents.

*(in urban areas) "...there are a lot more cars and people doing stupid things."*  
(Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, rural)

3.69 Three participants said that because there was more grass in the countryside, you would be less likely to hurt yourself.

*"If you crash in the country, you just crash into grass. You'd be fine."* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*"You're not going to kill anyone, you're just going to crash onto grass."* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, rural)

3.70 But others thought that rural roads were more dangerous:

*"You could be going round a corner and think there's nothing coming, and then crash if there is a car there."* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*"If you're in a car crash in the countryside, nine times out of ten it's going to kill you."* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

3.71 Some participants thought that both were equally dangerous, and that you needed different skills and experiences to negotiate different types of road safely. Very few participants seemed aware that fatal crashes involving young people were far more common on rural roads.



## Insurance and Driving Licences

3.72 In one group (a mini focus group in Glasgow) significant issues arose relating to driving without a licence and insurance. In this small group of four young men (aged 16 to 19) all claimed that driving without insurance or a licence was really common. This was particularly the case for two young men (who were friends) who said that people drove without a licence because the driving test was difficult – either they fail or do not even try. The theory test was seen as difficult and as it gets harder it seems to put some people off taking the test.

*“Your friend gives you their ID and if you are stopped [by the police] you say you are them.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

3.73 The young men said that sometimes parents let their children drive uninsured and unlicensed, but more commonly friends or older siblings lend their cars. None of the participants in the other groups mentioned these issues.

### **Summary – Attitudes and Experiences**

- Road safety is most closely associated with physical road design and safety as a pedestrian – particularly among the 16 to 19 year old age group.
- A good driver is seen as being calm, focused, thoughtful and aware, whereas a bad driver shows off and does not pay attention.
- A good passenger is calm and does not distract the driver, while also providing some help and advice (but not too much).
- Only one participant admitted that they had driven after drinking over the legal limit. But participants were very unsure what the legal limit was.
- Almost all participants had examples of friends driving after drinking over the legal limit. Participants were much more likely to travel with a driver who had been drinking if they had been drinking themselves.
- Young people had very high levels of trust in their friends. They were much more likely to get into a car with a friend who had been drinking than a stranger.
- Driving under the influence of drugs was generally seen as unacceptable – with the exception of prescription drugs. But cannabis was much more common and acceptable than other drugs like speed and cocaine.
- Drivers rarely thought of the risks to themselves – either of being in an accident or getting caught driving dangerously. They focused strongly on risks for passengers and other road users.
- Participants had a perception that speeding was very common and acceptable – particularly on quiet roads and motorways.
- Most participants said that they wore seatbelts all of the time. Those who did not were more likely to wear their seatbelt in the front than the back seat of the car, often because it was seen as more of a hassle to put your seatbelt on in the back.
- There were very varied views on whether talking on mobile phones while driving was acceptable, but there was general agreement that texting was unacceptable.
- Very few participants seemed aware that fatal crashes involving young people were far more common on rural roads.
- A very small minority of participants had personal experience of driving illegally – in stolen cars, without a licence, and uninsured.
- Participants' views were not fixed and the young men and women did sometimes change their views or contradict themselves throughout the group.

## 4. INFLUENCES ON BEHAVIOUR

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### Introduction

4.1 Participants were asked to give examples of influences on their behaviour when in a car. We also wanted to know what could change participants' behaviour as a passenger and as a driver. This was done in three ways. Firstly, participants were asked to focus specifically on the way in which alcohol and drugs influence driving behaviour. Then we asked participants to identify and prioritise the factors that influence their behaviour in a car. Finally participants were asked how, as passengers, they would respond to various imaginary situations that they may be in. This chapter sets out our findings.

### Influence of Alcohol and Drugs on Driving Behaviour

4.2 Participants were firstly specifically asked to discuss the influence that alcohol and drugs have on driving behaviour. Participants had lots to say on this topic. There was general agreement – among drivers and non-drivers – that alcohol made you “pumped up, cocky and over confident” and that this meant you were likely to drive in an unsafe way. In particular participants thought it made you want to go fast, affected your concentration, made you tired and meant that you did not think about the impact of your behaviour on others. Participants had earlier highlighted that a key characteristic of being a good driver was thinking about others (see Chapter 3, paragraph 3.5).

*“If you drink and drive it makes you crash. You get all pumped up.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*“If someone is used to drinking they might not think it has affected them but it can. Alcohol drops your concentration levels and your reactions.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

*“Alcohol makes you tired – more likely to fall asleep at the wheel.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

*“When you're drunk you don't think about others.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

4.3 One participant (the only one to admit to driving over the legal limit) mentioned that he felt he drove more carefully when under the influence of alcohol:

*“I've thought ‘maybe this is how I should usually drive’ – you know, checking the mirrors loads, driving slowly...”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

4.4 Participants thought that in general alcohol affected younger people more than older people, but that this varied depending on the individual.

*“Someone younger is less used to alcohol. An older person is more likely to know when they’ve had too much.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

*“It (alcohol) affects young people stronger.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19, male, rural)

4.5 Everyone thought that drugs affected people differently. Four young men (aged 16 to 19) thought that you could still take drugs like skunk (a strong form of cannabis) and make sensible judgements about driving:

*“Skunk can make you more chilled, but it can also make you paranoid.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*“People might drive more safely if they have taken drugs because they don’t want to get caught.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

### **Deterrents for Drink and Drug Driving**

4.6 Most participants felt that the biggest deterrent for driving over the alcohol limit, or under the influence of drugs, was that you might put someone else at risk. Participants did not seem to think about the risks to themselves, but rather to their friends, siblings and other people who may be on the road. Both drivers and non-drivers gave their views on this.

*“I don’t want to do it because I don’t want to put anyone at risk.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, female, urban)

4.7 Only one participant (a non-driver) mentioned the risk to the driver’s own life if driving over the alcohol limit:

*“Don’t drink anything, pay for a taxi, not your life.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, rural)

4.8 There were varied views about the chances of getting caught while driving over the alcohol limit, or under the influence of drugs. Participants tended to think that it was more difficult for the police to catch people who took drugs and drove, rather than alcohol.

*“Late at night you might get away with it.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old, female, urban)

### **Other Factors that Influence Behaviour**

4.9 This section of the focus groups was conducted by splitting participants into smaller buzz groups and asking them to make suggestions as to what can change or influence behaviour. Some specific factors were probed in more detail, such as policing, parents, friends and peer pressure.

4.10 Once all possible suggestions had been exhausted, the participants were asked to rank their suggestions in order, in terms of those that affect driving behaviour the most. By ranking we established the ‘top three’ influences for each

group. Some groups found this difficult and were not always able to come to an agreement.

4.11 In general, all of the groups made similar suggestions about influences on their behaviour. These are listed in table 4.1 below.

Where you are going	Speed cameras
Other drivers	Type of road
Friends	Risk of getting caught
Music	Weather conditions
Past experiences	Passenger behaviour
Traffic conditions	Parents
Peer pressure	Tiredness
Stress/emotion of the driver	Education/knowledge of road safety

4.12 None of the participants mentioned alcohol or drugs in this exercise. This is probably because all of the groups had spent considerable time already discussing these issues.

4.13 Groups were asked to rank these influences in order of importance. Some of the groups found this a very difficult exercise, with varied views from participants. Comparison between the groups showed that there were no clear themes in terms of the factors which influence driving behaviour the most. Some of the most commonly suggested factors are explored in more detail below.

### ***Friends and peer pressure***

4.14 Having passengers in the car, such as friends or colleagues was an influence on driving behaviour for some of the participants. But the extent of influence varied. For example, the group of 20 to 25 year old women in the Borders indicated that friends were unlikely to be an influence (the women ranked this as least influential). But the groups of 16 to 19 year olds (in both Glasgow and the Borders) indicated that friends and peer pressure strongly influenced driver behaviour whilst in a car. These comments were made by both drivers and non-drivers (including those who were driving illegally). For example the quote below was made by a non-driver, driving illegally.

*“If you are with a girl or your mates you show off, go through lights, do manoeuvres like hand brake turns.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*“Friends in the car make you show off.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

4.15 These young men seemed aware that showing off was not good driving behaviour. Some of the younger male participants had experiences of being in a car with friends when they were showing off. A small minority of participants had experiences of being in stolen cars with friends and could recount stories of dangerous driving as a result.

4.16 Earlier in the focus groups, many participants had said that the main reason that they would not drive dangerously was because of fear of injuring friends or relatives. But here many participants said they would be **more** likely to drive dangerously when friends were in the car. There is a clear contradiction here, suggesting that while participants would not want to harm friends, in reality they behave in ways in which they might cause accidents. The negative effect of peer pressure on driving behaviour has been highlighted in other research (Department for Transport, 2008 and Scottish Government, 2008d).

### ***Risk of getting caught***

4.17 Almost all of the groups (with the exception of the younger women in Glasgow) mentioned either policing, speed cameras or the risk of getting caught as an influencing factor on their driving behaviour. This is interesting as earlier in the groups most participants said that they were much more concerned about the risk of injuring others than getting caught (see Chapter 3, paragraph 3.41). Again, this demonstrates how participant views fluctuated and were at times contradictory throughout the group.

4.18 Both groups of 20 to 25 year old men discussed speed cameras. There were mixed opinions about the influence of speed cameras. For example, one driver said that they definitely influenced his behaviour and made him a better driver. Other non-drivers disagreed, with one stating that speed cameras can create more dangerous situations with people speeding up and slowing down to avoid getting caught.

4.19 The 20 to 25 year old male participants in the Borders spoke at length about speed cameras. The drivers described their frustration at having speed cameras on the straight parts of the road. This was seen to discourage overtaking on straight parts of the road, but encourage more dangerous overtaking at the corners.

4.20 Others thought that they were either a neutral or negative influence on driving behaviour. For example, the younger males in Glasgow said that speed cameras make drivers speed up and slow down, which was potentially dangerous.

*“It’s just a slap on the wrists; you immediately speed up again.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

*“I think they’re more dangerous, because you speed up, then slow down.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

### ***Music***

4.21 Playing loud music in the car while driving was mentioned as a key factor influencing both driver and passenger behaviour. This was raised in three of the six groups – by 16 to 19 year old women in Glasgow, and by both groups of 20 to 25 year olds men. Participants said that music could influence the mood of the driver, particularly through fast songs encouraging them to drive faster. Again, showing off was mentioned as leading to more dangerous driving behaviour.

*“Music – that’s the biggest one. People see music as a reflection of themselves, so they show off.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

### **Other drivers**

4.22 All of the groups discussed the negative influence that other drivers on the roads can have on behaviour. This was mainly mentioned by drivers, who commented on the influence of other road users, such as cars, buses and taxis. Several participants mentioned that they had been guilty of road rage.

*“Other people like buses and taxis who just cut in, in front of you.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, urban)

### **Weather**

4.23 All three groups of 20 to 25 year olds mentioned how the weather could influence driving behaviour. The Borders groups rated it as important, but for the older male participants in Glasgow, this was the biggest influence on behaviour.

*“Weather – it’s the first thing that you notice when you come out of the house.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

4.24 Linked to the weather was the condition and type of road you were driving on. Road condition was mentioned spontaneously by both the younger male groups as an influencing factor, but weather was not mentioned by any of the 16 to 19 year olds.

### **Parents**

4.25 Very few participants mentioned the influence of parents. If parents were not mentioned spontaneously by the participants, we probed their influence on participants’ driving and passenger behaviour. The drivers all agreed that when a parent was travelling in the car, their behaviour changed. But none of the participants thought about their parents if they were not present in the car. The 16 to 19 year old male participants in Glasgow rated parents as the most influencing factor on behaviour. Parents were seen as having an impact on music, which itself was rated as a factor which significantly affects driver and passenger behaviour (as discussed above).

*“You’re less likely to have music on and you’d drive more carefully.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

*“They’re just going to moan in your face.....I don’t think about them if they’re not in the car.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

4.26 It was clear from earlier discussions that the presence of relatives in the car does make a difference to how young people behave, particularly as drivers. Many participants mentioned that if siblings (particularly younger siblings), parents or grandparents were in the car they would drive particularly carefully. This was because participants felt a sense of responsibility for them.

## Improving Driver Behaviour Through Peer Pressure

4.27 Friends and peers clearly have a significant impact on the driving behaviour of young people – as outlined above. A key aim of the study was to explore the extent to which young people could be encouraged to be more proactive in influencing the driving behaviour of their friends. To explore how young people say they currently intervene and influence the driving behaviour of others, we asked participants to work in pairs to discuss one or two imaginary scenarios (depending on time and group size). For each scenario we asked participants if they would intervene, how, why and what would encourage them to take action:

- if your friend was going to drive home drunk;
- if your boy/girlfriend wasn't wearing their seatbelt;
- if your boy/girlfriend was going too fast;
- if your friend was talking on their phone; or
- if your friend was driving while really tired.

4.28 Participants were given a few minutes to think about the scenario before reporting back to the group about what they would do in that situation. The five scenarios are discussed in turn below.

4.29 Of course, what people say they would do and what they would actually do, is not necessarily the same thing. Nevertheless, the findings that follow provide a useful indicator of attitudes, including of what people think they should do in such situations.

### ***If your friend was going to drive home drunk***

4.30 The consensus was that participants would try to stop a friend driving home after they had been drinking. Participants gave practical suggestions such as giving money for a taxi, taking the keys or driving the friend home. In some groups, discussions arose about how drunk the friend was. The young men in particular said that it would depend on how much the friend had had to drink.

*“Depends on how drunk they were. If they were paralytic I’d say something, but if it was like 3 pints I wouldn’t bother. I might get them a coffee or something.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

*“Convince them not to do it....but it depends on how drunk they are....if they’ve only had a few pints...but I’d try not to let them do it. Maybe call them a taxi.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

4.31 Similarly, some of the younger women in Glasgow indicated that it would depend on how well you knew the person. For example, if you had known the friend for a long time this was more likely to result in intervention; whereas a new relationship may be jeopardised by interfering.

4.32 In the Borders, the older male participants indicated that they had all had experience of taking keys from friends to stop them driving. These men all said they



would try to stop someone driving while drunk because of the guilt they would feel if an accident happened.

*“If they do drive, you feel it’s not on your head because you tried to stop them.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, rural)

4.33 This links strongly with earlier discussions around feelings of trust and fear of involving friends in an accident (see Chapter 3, paragraph 3.41).

#### ***If your boyfriend/girlfriend wasn’t wearing their seatbelt***

4.34 We explored whether participants would say anything if their boyfriend or girlfriend was not wearing their seatbelt. All of the participants indicated that they would try to encourage people to wear their seatbelt. Drivers in the Glasgow group of 20 to 25 year old men were particularly concerned about incurring a fine if they were caught with someone in the car not wearing a seatbelt.

*“I’d make them wear it – it would be me in trouble and I’d get fined.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

4.35 Interestingly, few participants had raised the issue of getting caught earlier in the discussion groups. In the Borders, the drivers were more concerned about safety and causing an accident than incurring a fine. The younger group of men discussed the sense of guilt they would have if they had an accident and a passenger was not wearing their seatbelt. The 20 to 25 year old men stated that they would be more likely to say something to a girlfriend, than a friend. This was also because of a feeling of guilt and responsibility for the passenger.

4.36 Some participants did make the distinction between whether you were the driver or the passenger. The women’s group in the Borders indicated that if they were the driver, this gave them more authority to ask the passenger to wear a seatbelt, but if the driver was not wearing a seatbelt, these women felt there was little they could do.

#### ***If your boyfriend or girlfriend was going too fast***

4.37 All of the groups involved a debate about whether participants would ever say anything to a driver who was speeding. We asked participants whether, as a passenger, they would ask a friend to slow down. Almost everyone said that they would say something to their friend if they were driving too fast. Drivers, young men and those in the rural focus groups were most likely to do so.

*“I would say something if it was extreme.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

4.38 We followed up on this by asking what participants would do as a passenger if their boy or girlfriend was driving too fast. When discussing this, participants often said that their reaction ‘would depend’ on the situation – for example, how long they had known the person or how fast they were actually going. The inference was that if this was a new relationship participants would be less inclined to say something to

the driver. This links with the participants' views on speaking up about drink driving (as outlined above).

*"It depends how long I've known them."* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

*"It would depend on how fast they were going."* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old female, rural)

4.39 Others would be influenced by location. For example, some of the women in Glasgow indicated that if it was a quiet, empty road they would not say anything about the speed of the car. However, if they were in a built-up area, particularly near a school, then they would ask the driver to slow down. This links with earlier discussions where many participants stated that they believed quieter roads and motorways to be less dangerous (see Chapter 3, paragraph 3.66).

4.40 One male driver in the younger group in the Borders indicated that he would say to a friend to slow down, but not to a girlfriend. This was to do with image and not wanting to look foolish.

*"It's about impressing the lassies. I wouldn't want to look like a wimp in front of a girlfriend."* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

4.41 The women in the Borders did not make the same distinctions between friends and boy/girlfriends. They said they would be inclined to say something if they felt uncomfortable or scared in the car.

*"I would say something if it was making me feel uncomfortable."* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old female, rural)

4.42 A number of participants said that while they might try to intervene, they were not sure that it would make any difference.

*"This young guy was driving a stolen car, I was in the back. We were going along a long straight road really fast, and we were all shouting at him to slow down. We thought about jumping out but what happened was I ended up just reaching through and pulling up the handbrake."* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

### ***If your friend was talking on the phone***

4.43 We asked participants if they would say something to a friend who was on the phone while driving. Most felt that they would say something – but around a third said they would not. Talking on the phone was seen as acceptable in some cases – if the call was very short, if it was on a hands free system or if you were stopped at a red light.

4.44 Participants then discussed what they would do if the driver was talking on their phone. Again, participants offered very practical suggestions. In both groups with young women, participants suggested that they would offer to take the call on

behalf of the driver. They said that this would depend on the length of the conversation and how well they knew the driver. Participants were more likely to do so if they knew the driver well. But none of the young men mentioned this. They were more likely to encourage drivers to be careful, or say nothing about it.

*"I don't know. I would feel rude telling them to get off the phone, but I would say something if it's a long phone-call."* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old female, rural)

4.45 Most of the participants (both male and female) said that they would not grab the phone, stating that this was more likely to cause an accident than just letting the driver speak.

*"I'd advise them not to do it, but you can't physically take the phone off them. I'd say 'watch yourself' but it's their choice."* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

4.46 Some participants suggested they would tell the driver to hang up the phone. But some of the 20 to 25 year old men believed that talking on the phone was the same as having a passenger in the car. The older male participants in the Borders would only intervene if the driver was sending a text message.

*"It's no more (a distraction) than if you have a passenger in the car."* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

4.47 There was a general agreement that texting was unacceptable. Many participants said that if their friends did this they would take the phone away from them.

### ***If your friend was driving while really tired***

4.48 Participants were asked what they would do if their friend was driving while really tired. All of the groups offered practical suggestions about keeping the driver talking, getting them coffee or offering to drive themselves (if this was an option). Participants were less likely to do anything if they were close to home.

*"If it was a short journey I'd tell them to get on with it, but if it was long, I'd tell them to take a break."* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

4.49 Again, participants placed a lot of trust in their friends. Most would feel confident asking their friend if they were fine to drive, and trusting their answer.

*"I'd ask them if they were ok to drive and if they said yes, I'd go with it."* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

4.50 The female participants were more likely to state that they would say something if they felt uncomfortable in the car.

*"I would say something if I was feeling uncomfortable as the driver is putting both your lives at risk."* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old female, rural)

### **Effectiveness of Peer Influence in Improving Driver Behaviour**

4.51 The focus groups did not specifically explore participant views on the impact of any attempts to influence their friends' behaviour as drivers. But participants did raise a number of interesting issues about the likely effect of their interventions. A number of participants mentioned that simply saying something about dangerous behaviour was unlikely to have an impact. This was particularly evident in any attempts to influence speeding – where participants felt that speaking out was their only option.

*“It’s not easy but I would still say to her to slow down, but I doubt she would listen.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

*“I would definitely listen if they were right. If I was only doing 50 or 60 I wouldn’t listen – I would probably wait for a second warning.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

4.52 Participants also mentioned that it was much easier for drivers to influence passenger behaviour, than vice versa.

*“I would always say to them [to wear a seatbelt]. If they’re driving you can’t really force them to do it – it’s not your car, but you can say to them to do it.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old female, rural)

*“I wouldn’t drive if they haven’t got their seatbelt on. I’d just pull over and put the handbrake on.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

4.53 This links strongly with discussions at the start of the groups, exploring what made a good passenger. Most participants felt that passengers should only occasionally provide help, and a minority mentioned that a good passenger should tell the driver if they were driving badly. There were very varied views on how much help a passenger should provide. This is explored in more detail in Chapter 3 (paragraph 3.11).

### **Common Themes in Peer Influence**

4.54 There were a number of clear themes emerging from the discussions about when and how young people would attempt to influence driver behaviour.

- **Type of relationship** – Some of the scenarios specifically asked what participants would do if it was a boyfriend or girlfriend in the car, as opposed to a friend. We wanted to explore whether there were any differences in the types of relationships we presented. One male in the Borders indicated that he would speak up to a friend, but not to a girlfriend for fear of looking foolish. Other participants felt that regardless of the relationship, if they felt uncomfortable in the car (whether through speeding, or the driver talking on the phone) they would speak up. On balance, most participants felt that they would speak up whether a friend or partner. Participants also felt that drivers have far more control over

how passengers behave, and that as a passenger it was difficult to influence the behaviour of drivers or other passengers.

- **Trust and friendship** – Participants also mentioned the length of the relationship. All agreed that if you had known the friend for a long time, you were more likely to either, trust them to drive safely (and therefore there would be no need to have to say anything) or to be able to say something and have the friendship remain intact. It was believed that new friendships could be jeopardised by saying something.
- **Perception of danger** – Some of the situations were seen as more serious than others. For example talking on the phone and driving when tired were not seen as being as serious as driving home drunk. Participants were more likely to intervene in what they saw as the more serious or dangerous situations. They talked about danger both for drivers, passengers and other road users – including other drivers and pedestrians.

Each person had their own limits about the extent of dangerous driving behaviour they would tolerate. For example, some male participants said they would only intervene if the friend was going to drive after drinking more than three pints of beer. Most participants said they would only say something to a friend talking on the phone if the call was particularly long, or the driver was attempting to send a text. The personal limits were different for each individual, and dangerous driving behaviour was often tolerated.

- **Ability to offer a practical solution** – In most cases, the participants mentioned very practical solutions to addressing dangerous behaviour. For example, if someone was talking on the phone participants suggested taking the call on their behalf. If someone was going to drive after drinking alcohol, participants suggested confiscating their keys. And if someone was driving when tired participants suggested talking to keep them awake, or offering a place to rest. Intervention appeared most difficult when addressing speeding, where the passenger had no practical solutions. In this case the only intervention suggested by the participants was to say something to the driver.
- **Guilt and responsibility** – A number of participants mentioned that if you at least attempted to influence driver behaviour (even if it was not successful) then you were no longer responsible for the consequences. The main reason participants would intervene was because they would feel a sense of guilt if someone was in an accident, or hurt someone else. But participants did also mention the risk of getting caught as a factor– particularly in relation to seatbelt wearing.

### **Summary – Influences on Behaviour**

- Participants were asked to explore how alcohol and drugs impact on driving behaviour. There was general agreement that alcohol made you “pumped up, cocky and over confident”.
- Participants thought that in general alcohol affected young people more than older people, but that this varied depending on the individual. Views on how drugs affected driving behaviour were more varied.
- Views on other influences on behaviour were very varied. Among the factors mentioned were friends, music, past experiences, driving conditions, other drivers, emotions, parents and education.
- Early in the focus groups, many participants said that they wouldn’t drive dangerously for fear of injuring friends or relatives. But here, participants often said that having friends in the car resulted in showing off – which they knew was dangerous behaviour. There is a clear contradiction here.
- Music had a big influence on mood, and was closely linked to showing off and dangerous driving behaviour. Parents generally only had an influence over participants when physically in the car.
- Participants were asked to discuss if and how they would intervene in imaginary scenarios where their friend was driving dangerously. Each individual had their own limits of acceptable driving behaviour, beyond which they would intervene.
- Participants were most likely to intervene if the driver was a close friend and if they could offer a practical solution – like taking a call for the driver, getting a taxi, offering to take over driving, or finding a place to stay for the night.
- Speeding was an issue which participants found difficult to address, as their only option was to say something to the driver.
- Participants suggested that their attempts to influence driver behaviour did not always have an impact, particularly if there was no practical solution to offer.
- Participants also mentioned that it was much easier for drivers to influence passenger behaviour, than vice versa.

## 5. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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### Introduction

5.1 The focus groups involved exploring young people's views on their rights and responsibilities as a driver and/or passenger. We discussed both the rights and responsibilities participants currently have, and those they expect to have. This was achieved primarily by asking participants to rate the extent to which they agreed with a series of eleven statements, and to explain their views. The statements asked participants to consider the current and potential future rights of younger drivers and passengers, as well as exploring how these balance with responsibilities. The statements explored views towards a number of key themes:

- restrictions or interventions specifically for younger drivers;
- general policing and the law;
- responsibilities of parents and passengers; and
- government responsibilities.

5.2 Interesting points raised during this exercise were then discussed in more detail as a group. In addition, participants raised issues relating to rights and responsibilities throughout the discussions. This section sets out our key findings in this area.

### Restrictions or Interventions for Younger Drivers

#### *Stricter laws for younger drivers*

5.3 Participants were asked a series of statements about their views on restrictions or interventions for younger drivers. Firstly, we simply asked whether participants felt that, generally, there should be stricter laws for young drivers than older ones – without prompting yet on specific laws. There were some very strong views on this. Overall, the majority of participants (42 of the 54 participants) were against suggestions that there should be stricter laws for younger drivers.

5.4 Interestingly, those who agreed that there should be stronger laws were all men. For example, some young men aged 16 to 19 in Glasgow indicated that drivers under 18 years old should be subject to more checks and rules. But, the young men were not really sure what laws should be stricter. One of their suggestions was that people should not be able to carry passengers until they were 21. They thought that this could be incentivised if it was matched by a reduction in insurance for the under 21s.

5.5 Most other participants disagreed with this statement. There were three main reasons for this. Firstly, many participants said that having different laws for younger people would be discriminatory and unfair.

*“Everyone should be equal.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, urban)

*“You can’t make different rules for everyone.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19, male, rural)

5.6 Secondly, some participants indicated that having stricter rules meant that young people would not be able to develop their experience as a driver in different situations.

*“You’re not getting much experience of driving if you are limited by the laws.”*  
(Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, rural)

5.7 Finally, the main reason for disagreement was that participants felt that experience, and not age, was a far greater influence on driving ability.

*“What if someone passes at 40 – they’re still a new driver, so it’s not fair.”*  
(Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

5.8 In discussions around stricter laws for young drivers, many participants raised (unprompted) the possibility of having more restrictions on **new** drivers of all ages. Many felt that this would be fairer as it would link safe driving with experience rather than age.

*“I’ve done more than 10,000 miles since I passed my test and I’m definitely a better driver.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, rural)

5.9 One group of 20 to 25 year old men suggested that there could be restrictions for new drivers in terms of car engine size.

*“I think you should have your licence for a few years before you get a certain engine size. Maybe for the first two years you could have no more than a 1.3.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, rural)

5.10 But, as discussed above, other participants thought that placing restrictions on new drivers meant that they were not building up the experience that they needed. For example, 20 to 25 year old women in the Borders indicated they did not think that new drivers should be restricted for very long, or else they would not get the necessary experience to become a better driver.

### **Stricter laws on drink driving**

5.11 Participants were asked whether they agreed with the statement that ‘people under a certain age shouldn’t be allowed to drink and drive at all’. There were mixed views on this statement. In total 24 participants agreed and 30 disagreed. Again, male participants were proportionately much more likely to agree with the statement (20 participants) than women (4 participants).

5.12 In discussing this issue, participants raised many of the same issues debated earlier in the focus groups (set out in more detail in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.14).



Many participants agreed with this statement, but felt that no-one should be able to drink and drive – not just young people. Many had strong views on this:

*“No one should be able to drink or take drugs and then drive. It’s unacceptable.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old female, urban)

5.13 Some of those who disagreed felt that the current limit was so low that it would not make much difference to reduce this. Others mentioned that each individual had their own tolerance level for alcohol, and that some people would be able to handle alcohol better. (See also discussion in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.18).

5.14 A minority of participants felt that experience was a better indicator of ability to drink and drive than age. The inference was that if you are a more experienced driver, you are able to drive more safely under the influence of alcohol.

*“Driving experience is more appropriate than age.”* (Non- driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

*“A better driver can drive better drunk.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

5.15 Younger participants (in the 16 to 19 year old band) were more likely to argue the case for having the same rules for everyone so as not to discriminate against younger drivers.

*“This would mean young people are being victimised – it’s saying that after one drink young people will have an accident.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

5.16 Only one participant (in a younger male group) mentioned the reasons behind suggestions for restricting younger drivers.

*“You should also look at the statistics that young people are more likely to have an accident and have a lower tolerance to alcohol, so I can see the basis for it.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

### **Stricter laws on driving at night**

5.17 Participants were asked to comment on whether they felt that ‘people under a certain age shouldn’t be able to drive at night.’ There was almost unanimous disagreement with this proposal. Some felt that this was an impractical suggestion, and could not be monitored. There were suggestions that it was sometimes easier to drive at night, as there were fewer cars on the road.

*“Sometimes it is easier to drive at night.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old female, urban)

### **Stricter laws on carrying passengers**

5.18 Participants were then asked if agreed that ‘people under a certain age shouldn’t be allowed to carry passengers at all, or at night.’ Again, almost everyone disagreed with this statement. Views were based on the impracticality of the statement and the inference that young people were not good drivers.

*“That’s age discrimination – you can’t judge by age. You could be a 34 year old man who speeds like hell or an 18 year old who’s really cautious.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

*“Why would you be allowed to pass and not be considered safe enough to carry passengers? It doesn’t make sense.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, female, rural)

5.19 Most felt that carrying passengers was one of the key reasons why people have a car, either to pick up friends, relatives or to use it for work. Not being able to carry passengers was seen as too restrictive.

*“It’s why you buy a car. You pay enough for it through your road tax.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

*“What’s the point in driving if you can’t have passengers?”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old female, urban)

5.21 There was the general consensus that all of the statements relating to ‘people under a certain age’ would be very difficult to monitor and would largely be ignored by young drivers. The view was that experience was more important in determining driving ability than age.

### **Enhanced training for new drivers**

5.22 Participants were asked one statement which particularly related to new drivers (rather than young drivers). We asked whether new drivers should get practice driving in risky situations as part of their training. Almost everybody agreed, suggesting that it would be good to practice at night, on the motorway and in different types of weather. Only one person disagreed.

5.23 One participant had completed the Pass Plus driver training and he recommended it to other drivers.

*“I think it should be a choice but it is beneficial and I would recommend it.”*  
(Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

*“I think it is a really great idea. Over the winter I ended up driving in a really horrendous snow storm. It was the first time I had ever driven in the snow and I had no idea how to keep the car on the road – I had no experience.”*  
(Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

5.24 Although some thought Pass Plus should continue to be optional, many participants suggested that it should be mandatory. This was seen as an alternative to stricter rules for new or younger drivers.

*“Pass Plus should be compulsory. That should just be the test.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, rural)

5.25 A minority of participants (two young men in the Glasgow focus groups) felt that making the test more difficult would result in more people driving without licences (see Chapter 3, paragraph 3.72 for more discussion on illegal driving).

## **General Policing and the Law**

### ***Increased policing of driving behaviour***

5.26 Participants were asked whether more police and speed cameras were needed to make sure people stick to the rules. Responses were relatively mixed. Overall just over half agreed. Proportionately, female participants were considerably more likely to agree that more police and speed cameras were needed. Many young men (particularly in the 20 to 25 age group) had very negative views on speed cameras. Non-drivers were also more likely to agree that more restrictions would help people stick to the rules, than drivers – who often saw speed cameras as a nuisance.

5.27 Average speed cameras were mentioned as a major influence on driving behaviour – far more influential than traditional speed cameras. This was because there was a greater risk of getting caught, and they slowed you down over the whole area covered, rather than just for a short distance.

*“You should get more of those average speed cameras. I hate them but they totally work.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old female, urban)

5.28 Participants generally saw policing as having an impact on driving speed, rather than other elements of driving behaviour. In wider discussion, a minority of participants indicated that they felt that more policing was not necessary because it was the driver’s responsibility to decide how fast was safe.

*“It is the right of the driver to go at a speed they think they can drive at – and their responsibility to make sure the passengers feel safe.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

### ***Use of mobile phones***

5.29 We asked whether participants felt that ‘drivers should not be able to speak on the phone at all – even if it is hands free’. Most participants disagreed with this statement. Those who disagreed thought that speaking to a passenger was just as distracting as speaking on the phone. Those who agreed with the statement indicated that speaking to someone on the phone is distracting, whether the driver is physically holding the telephone or not.

*“Hands-free is easier since you don’t have to hold the phone but after you have finished the call you are still thinking about the conversation – so still distracted.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

5.30 General views towards use of mobile phones while driving are covered in more detail in Chapter 3 (paragraph 3.64).

## **Parental and Passenger Responsibility**

### ***Parental responsibility***

5.31 Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement ‘parents have a responsibility to influence how young people use their cars.’ The majority of the participants felt that parents did have a responsibility. But parents were rarely mentioned spontaneously – only when prompted. Participants did not have much to say about parental responsibility.

*“I drive differently when my mum and dad are in the car. I don’t want to be driving like an idiot and I don’t want to kill them, or get moaned at.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

### ***Passenger responsibility***

5.32 Both drivers and non-drivers were asked whether they felt ‘passengers have a responsibility to tell people if they are going too fast’. Most participants agreed that passengers do have a responsibility. As indicated in the previous chapter, we saw that most participants would say something to a driver if they felt uncomfortable travelling in the car.

5.33 Drivers and non-drivers agreed that passengers do have some responsibility for their behaviour in the car, and to speak up if they do not feel safe.

*“The way I see it, if they’re over 14 then it’s their problem, not mine. It’s their responsibility (to put on their seatbelt).”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, rural)

*“If they’re speeding it’s still your life that’s in danger.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, rural)

*“It is your responsibility to say something if you feel unsafe.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old female, rural)

5.34 However, the drivers in the groups tended to argue that drivers have the greater responsibility.

*“I would definitely listen if they were right. If I was only doing 50 or 60 miles I wouldn’t listen. I would probably wait for a second warning.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old female, rural)

5.35 Views were varied regarding the balance of responsibility between passengers and drivers. Drivers mentioned that they always felt a strong sense of responsibility for passengers when they were children, or younger siblings. Many young male drivers mentioned that they felt more responsibility towards their girlfriends than male friends – meaning that they would be more likely to encourage seatbelt use or drive more slowly.

*“I would always drive slower if I have my younger brother or sister in the car.”*  
(Driver, 20 to 25 year old female, rural)

5.36 But ultimately, participants agreed that drivers had the overall responsibility for ensuring safety of the driver and passengers.

*“Part of passing your test is accepting responsibility to do the right thing.”*  
(Driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

*“The passenger has the right to say something, but not the responsibility if there is an accident.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

## **Government Responsibilities**

### ***Overall responsibility for safe roads***

5.37 Participants were asked if they agreed with the statement ‘the Government should be responsible for making roads safer – not drivers or passengers’. The vast majority of participants did not agree with this statement. Participants felt that everyone was responsible for making roads safer, particularly drivers and passengers.

5.38 Many participants felt that the Government was responsible for ‘setting the limits’ and putting laws in place, but it was up to drivers to adhere to them.

*“The government can put the law in place, but unless people follow them there is no meaning.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old female, urban)

*“I think it is a bit of both. The Government are aware of the laws, but they are not behind the wheel. It’s up to the driver at the end of the day.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

5.39 One of the younger male groups discussed the physical conditions of the road as being the responsibility of the Government. This group specifically mentioned the A9 road, which was described as being “notoriously dangerous”.

*“Government need to make it better to drive on, but it’s the people that cause the accidents.”* (Driver, 16 to 19 year old, male, rural)

### ***Setting speed limits***

5.40 Participants were asked whether ‘it should be up to the driver to decide how fast is safe, not the government.’ Most participants disagreed, but almost a third

agreed. Drivers and young men (particularly the 20 to 25 year olds) were much more likely to agree with this than non-drivers.

*“I say bring in the autobahn. Between midnight and 5am the motorways should be de-restricted.”* (Driver, 20 to 25 year old, male, rural)

### Other Key Issues

5.41 In discussing rights and responsibilities, a number of other issues arose. A key theme emerging was the responsibility of passengers to wear their seatbelts to avoid injury to the driver, or other passengers.

*“It’s selfish not to wear your seatbelt as you could kill someone else in front.”*  
(Driver, 20 to 25 year old female, rural)

*“If someone isn’t wearing a belt they’re likely to kill you in an accident – they’re putting you at risk.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

5.42 Many participants suggested they had been influenced by television advertisements showing what could happen if passengers in the back seat did not wear their seatbelt.

5.43 Others mentioned the rights of younger drivers in relation to older drivers – who were seen by many participants as dangerous drivers at risk of an accident. Some participants felt that if there were stricter laws for young or new drivers, these should be matched with stricter regulation of older drivers.

*“There should be stricter laws for younger drivers, but also for older ones. Maybe when you’re over 60.”* (Non-driver, 20 to 25 year old male, urban)

*“Older drivers are not up to date with the rules. They think they are better but can be more ignorant.”* (Non-driver, 16 to 19 year old male, urban)

5.44 There was a strong feeling from many participants that new drivers should be good drivers – as they have just passed their driving test and are fully aware of all of the laws. Participants did believe that experience led to better driving, but also felt that as people got older they could lose touch with good driving behaviour and become less aware of the law. This meant that most participants felt that the rights and responsibilities of new drivers should not be restricted without good reason and clear evidence.

### Summary – Rights and Responsibilities

- The focus groups explored young peoples' views towards rights and responsibilities as a driver and passenger. Participants were asked to consider a series of statements about rights and responsibilities, and discuss their views on these.
- Overall, participants strongly resisted suggestions of greater restrictions on younger drivers. They argued that these would be discriminatory and restrictive. There were also concerns that if younger drivers were restricted they would not gain the necessary experience to become a better driver.
- Participants did not see why young drivers – and not all new drivers – should be targeted. Only one participant said that he could see the rationale for restrictions on young drivers, as young people were more likely to be involved in accidents.
- Participants did spontaneously suggest some potential measures to increase the safety of **new** drivers, including:
  - making Pass Plus mandatory or incorporating elements into the driving test;
  - restricting young people from driving cars above a certain engine size.
- There was particularly strong resistance to measures which restrict how young people are able to use their cars, including:
  - restricting young people from driving at night; or
  - introducing stricter laws on carrying passengers for young people.
- These measures were seen as impractical, unnecessary and too difficult to regulate. Participants also mentioned that this type of restriction could cause them real difficulty at work and in their home and social lives.
- The participants felt that drivers had ultimate responsibility for ensuring safety, although:
  - passengers had a responsibility to wear seatbelts and speak up if they felt uncomfortable; and
  - parents had a responsibility to influence how young people behave.
- Participants felt that the Government had a responsibility for setting limits for safe driving behaviour and ensuring the physical condition of the roads. But this responsibility was shared by drivers and passengers who must adhere to the rules.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

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### Key Findings

#### *About the research*

6.1 This research was commissioned by the Scottish Government, and undertaken by ODS Consulting. It explored the views of young people aged 16 to 25 towards road safety. It involved six focus groups – four with young men and two with young women. The groups were held in Glasgow and Scottish Borders. It is intended to inform the new Scottish Road Safety Strategy, which is currently being developed.

6.2 The study provided a very detailed insight into the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of young people. But, throughout the groups participants often contradicted themselves or changed their minds. Often, participants had not thought in detail about these issues before and were just beginning to shape their opinions.

#### *Attitudes and experiences*

6.3 Drivers rarely thought of the risks to themselves – either of being in an accident or getting caught driving dangerously. They focused strongly on risks for passengers and other road users. The young men and women had very high levels of trust in their friends as drivers.

6.4 Participants were very unsure about what the legal limit for drinking and driving was. Only one participant said that he had definitely driven while over the limit, but others gave examples that demonstrated that they probably had driven over the limit without realising it. Participants were much more likely to travel with a drink driver if they too had been drinking, and were much more likely to travel with a close friend who had been drinking, rather than a friend of a friend or stranger.

6.5 Driving under the influence of drugs was generally seen as unacceptable – with the exception of prescription drugs. But cannabis was much more common and acceptable than other drugs like speed and cocaine.

6.6 Participants felt that speeding was very common and acceptable, particularly on quiet roads and motorways. Most participants said that they wore seatbelts all the time, although some did not always wear them – particularly in the back seat. A very small minority of participants had personal experience of driving illegally – in stolen cars, without a licence, and uninsured.

#### *Influences on behaviour*

6.7 The focus groups explored what influences behaviour as a passenger and driver, and how participants would respond to a range of potentially dangerous situations. There was no clear consensus on the main influences on behaviour as a driver or passenger. Some of the key factors identified included friends, peer



pressure, risk of getting caught, music, other drivers, weather and parents. Drugs and alcohol were also seen as having a clear impact on driving behaviour.

6.8 Having friends in the car encouraged many drivers to show off, even though this had earlier been identified as poor driving behaviour. This contradicted earlier discussions where most participants said that they would not drive dangerously as they would not want to put their friends at risk. Parents only influenced behaviour when physically in the car – generally encouraging safer and more responsible driving, and promoting use of seatbelts.

6.9 Participants had their own limits of acceptable driving behaviour, beyond which they would intervene. These often fluctuated, but participants were most likely to intervene if:

- their friend was in what they perceived to be a particularly dangerous situation (generally involving drink driving);
- it was a close and trusted friend; or
- they could offer a practical solution.

6.10 Speeding was an issue that the participants found difficult to address (when travelling as a passenger), as they could not offer a practical solution and their only option was to say something to the driver. Participants felt that as passengers it was sometimes difficult to influence driver behaviour, and simply saying something did not always have an impact.

### ***Rights and responsibilities***

6.11 The focus groups explored young peoples' views towards rights and responsibilities as a driver and passenger. Participants were asked to consider a series of statements about rights and responsibilities, and discuss their views on these. Overall, participants strongly resisted suggestions of greater restrictions on younger drivers. They argued that these would be discriminatory and restrictive, and were not sure why young drivers – and not all new drivers – should be targeted. There was particularly strong resistance to measures which restrict how young people are able to use their cars, including limits on driving at night or carrying passengers. But participants did spontaneously suggest some potential measures to increase the safety of **new** drivers, including making Pass Plus mandatory or part of the driving test.

6.12 Participants felt that the Government had a responsibility for setting limits for safe driving behaviour and ensuring the physical condition of the roads. But this responsibility was shared by drivers and passengers who must adhere to the rules.

## Emerging Themes

6.13 The study identified a number of key themes in young people's views on making the roads safer. These are set out in detail below.

- **Changing and flexible opinions** – Many participants changed their minds and contradicted themselves throughout the group – particularly the 16 to 19 year olds.
- **Lack of awareness** – Many participants simply did not know that young people are more at risk of involvement in a road accident. There also appears to be a prevalent attitude that serious accident and injury is something which happens to other people. In the future, it will be important to raise young people's awareness of the reality that young drivers are more likely to be involved in car accidents.
- **Trust in the driver** – Participants had very strong beliefs that if their friend was driving them somewhere, the friend would take great care not to put them in a risky or dangerous situation. But this level of trust is often misplaced – with many examples of friends driving while over the limit, speeding and so on. This high level of trust appears to result in young people being put in more risky situations with close friends than with those they know less well. Issues surrounding friendship and trust could be key areas for future road safety activity with this age group.
- **Strong resistance to laws based on age** – There was a very strong resistance from almost everyone about any rules which are stricter for young drivers than older ones. But, there was much more acceptance of stricter rules based on driving experience. There was widespread recognition that drivers generally get better and safer with more experience.
- **Previous experiences** – Many participants mentioned that being involved in an accident had a big impact on the way they drove. Most felt that it made them a better and more careful driver. But, it appears that hearing about accidents that others have been involved in does not have such a major impact.
- **Minority of more extreme experiences** – In speaking to 54 young participants, we found two participants (friends) with experience of stealing cars, driving without a licence, taking drugs and driving, and driving uninsured. This appears to be related to the neighbourhood the young people live in, and the culture of driving behaviour that exists there.

## Appendix One Screener Survey

### Location

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of group**

\_\_\_\_\_

### Matrix

i.e. is this a female only group, male only, mixed? And is it with 16-19 or 20-25s?

#### Introduce research:

We are conducting some focus groups on with young people to find out your views on how to make the roads safer for everyone. We wondered if you would be interested in coming along to an informal group for an hour and a half on *(date)* at *(time)*.

You would receive **£30** for attending – plus travel expenses.

Can I just ask you a few questions to make sure you meet the criteria for our group?

<b>Name</b>	
-------------	--

What age are you?

<b>Age</b>	16–19 years	20-25 years	<b>Interviewer write in age:</b>
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<b>Sex</b>	Male	Female
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Are you...?

<b>Education/occupation</b>	Interviewer tick one box
At school	
At college (full or part time)	
At university (full or part time)	
In full time training/apprenticeship	
In part time employment	
In full time employment	
Not in education, training or employment	

Are you....?

<b>Driving status</b>	Interviewer tick one box
A Pre Driver (under 17 years)	
A Learner Driver	
A Driver	
A Non-driver	

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

<b>Disabled</b>	
Yes	
No	
Prefer not to say	

How would you describe your ethnic group?

<b>White</b>		<b>Multiple ethnic background</b>	
White Scottish		Any (write in)	
White Welsh			
White English		<b>Black</b>	
White Irish		African	
Other (write in)		Caribbean	
		Other (write in)	
<b>Asian</b>			
Indian		Gypsy traveller	
Pakistani			
Bangladeshi		<b>Other background</b>	
Chinese		Other (write in)	
Other (write in)			
		Prefer not to say	

And are there any times that you wouldn't be able to come to the group?

--

Now I just need some contact information for you. We'll only use this to invite you to the group.

<b>Address</b>	
<b>Contact Telephone Number:</b>	
Home	
Mobile	
<b>Email Address</b>	

Please could you print your name and sign below, to say that you are happy for us to use your contact details to invite you to our discussion group.

Print name

---

Signature

---

Thanks for your time. We will contact you soon with the details of the group. In the meantime, here is a leaflet that tells you a little about us, and our research. There is also a free phone contact number in case you want to speak to us.

## Appendix Two Focus Group Discussion Guide

### Introduction

- Introduce yourself and ODS Consulting
- Explain the purpose of the research and how views will be used
- Explain that:
  - ODS will not attribute comments to individuals
  - Your comments will remain anonymous
  - Participation is voluntary
  - Be honest – it's okay to disagree (nicely)
- Explain how views will be recorded
- Check if group happy to be recorded
- Explain how feedback will be provided
- Respondent introductions – name, driver or non-driver

### Warm up/context

- **Pairs: What thoughts, associations and images spring to mind when I mention 'road safety'?**
- As full group: Explore different suggestions - What makes you think of that image?

### Attitudes to road safety

- **Groups (split drivers/ non drivers): What makes a good driver? What makes a good passenger?**

#### Statements:

- I would never answer my phone if I was driving.
- I would ask someone to stop talking on their phone while they were driving.
- It is safe to drive after two drinks.
- I would get in a car with someone who had been drinking as long as it wasn't too much.
- I don't always wear a seatbelt; it depends on who I am with.
- If I feel tired I would just keep going and get home – rather than stop.
- I feel safer when I'm driving than when I'm a passenger.
- I would never say to a friend to slow down.
- I always check other people are wearing their seatbelt.
- Taking drugs and driving is okay - if you don't get caught.
- Roads in town are more dangerous than roads in the country

- **Drink driving/drugs** – Would you - or have you ever been - in a car, when the driver has been drinking or taking drugs? How much is it okay to drink? When would this be okay? How do drugs/ drink affect how you drive? Do they affect young people differently than older people?
- **Speeding** – Is it ever okay to speed? In what situation? Why? Would you ever say anything to anyone who is speeding?
- **Seatbelt wearing** – Does everyone do it (why/why not)? What are the general views on seatbelts – in what situation would you not wear a seatbelt?

## Rights and responsibilities

### Statements:

- The government is responsible for making roads safe. It's not up to drivers or passengers.
- Parents have a responsibility to influence how young people use their cars.
- Passengers have a responsibility to tell people if they are going too fast.
- It's up to the driver to decide how fast is safe – not the government.
- People under a certain age shouldn't be allowed to carry passengers – at all/ at night.
- People under a certain age shouldn't be able to drive at night.
- People under a certain age shouldn't be able to drink and drive at all.
- New drivers should get practice driving in risky situations – at night, different environments, etc.
- People shouldn't be allowed to speak on the phone at all while driving – even if it is hands free
- More police and speed cameras are needed to make sure people stick to the rules.
- There should be stricter laws for younger drivers than older ones.

Discuss those where there are disagreements/ people are unsure. Probe to see how passengers' views differ from drivers.

## Influences on behaviour

### ▪ What influences how you behave when driving/ travelling in a car?

Probe friends and peer pressure, other passengers, parents, education, speed cameras, policing and risk of getting caught.

(Rank top 3 influences)

- Scenarios for pairs/ small groups to discuss:
  - If your friend was going to drive home drunk
  - If your boy/ girlfriend was going too fast
  - If your friend was driving while really tired
  - If your friend was talking on their phone
  - If your boy/ girlfriend wasn't wearing their seatbelt
- Would you stop it? Why/ why not? How? What would make you say something?

## Wrap up

- Any other comments
- Next steps – summary report and feedback will go to each participant
- Issue incentives

## Appendix Three References

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