



**BETTER DRIVING:**

**'RESPECT' ON THE ROAD**

**A STUDY LED BY THE MOTORISTS' FORUM**

**January 2007**

## **Contents**

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND</b>	<b>7</b>
- The 'Respect' Agenda	7
- Respect on the Road	7
- What do we know about 'respectful' and 'disrespectful' behaviour on the road?	9
<b>CHAPTER 3: ARE DRIVING STANDARDS BETTER OR WORSE THAN THEY WERE?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5: WHO SHOULD WE TRY TO INFLUENCE?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH EVIDENCE</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENCOURAGE AND RECOGNISE GOOD DRIVING</b>	<b>19</b>
- Communication between drivers	20
- Influencing behaviour	20
- Training and testing	22
- Enforcement	24
- Incentives	26
- Self help	27
<b>CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>CHAPTER 10: CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES</b>	<b>30</b>
Annex A: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	31
Annex B: PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND – A paper by Professor Mark Conner, University of Leeds	34
Annexes C – F: SELF HELP ADVICE	42

This report has been prepared by the Motorists' Forum Better Driving: 'Respect' on the Road Working Group. It has been endorsed by the whole Motorists' Forum. The report has been sent to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP and the Home Secretary, The Rt Hon John Reid MP. Copies are available on the Motorists' Forum web site [www.cfit.gov.uk/mf](http://www.cfit.gov.uk/mf)

## Executive Summary

This study has been initiated by the Motorists' Forum in response to an invitation from the Department for Transport for the Forum to consider how the Prime Minister's 'Respect' initiative might be applied to road user behaviour, as a contribution to their review of road safety.

There are still far too many deaths and injuries on the road to be tolerable in a civilised society. Human error is a contributory factor in a high proportion of collisions - probably about two-thirds. If we could find ways of persuading drivers to drive with more consideration for the safety of themselves and others - in others words with more 'respect' - there would be far fewer casualties; and driving would be a less stressful and more pleasant experience than it sometimes is now. How to influence driver behaviour is a challenge as old as the motor car itself. We have looked at the latest experience and research to see if we could identify new approaches to the problem.

Bad behaviour on the roads has obvious connections with anti-social behaviour generally, which is the subject of the 'Respect' work being taken forward by the Home Office. **The links between serious traffic offences and criminal behaviour generally are worth further work, building on the research already done. And issues such as education and enforcement are part of the solution to both sorts of behavioural problems.** But the differences in the legal framework and the measures that are possible in each area are sufficiently large to make it sensible for 'respect on the road' to be considered as a separate issue. The Home Office work has now seen 'parenting' as a key issue to be tackled. **Rather than try to deal with 'respect on the road' as an aspect of the broad 'Respect' agenda, or even as a generic problem about conduct on the road, we think it more practical to consider how individual behaviours, whether good or bad, can be influenced.**

This study has not been able to establish any clear indication as to whether driving standards are falling or not. But standards are still not high enough and with the ever reducing amount of road space available to each motorist and the modern high technology based vehicle, high standards of competence and awareness become ever more important. We think that monitoring trends in different types of driver behaviour would be useful in evaluating whether particular interventions are working, and in planning new measures. **So we suggest that more work should be done to establish facts about, and trends in, driver behaviour and we have put forward a number of possible ways of collecting the necessary data.**

We believe that it is not only necessary to discourage and if necessary penalise bad behaviour but also to encourage and recognise good driving. Positive incentive systems can be more useful than coercion or punishment in encouraging drivers to drive responsibly and **we should like to see the Government consider positive incentives for those who drive responsibly and safely.**

It will not be a simple task to persuade people to change behaviour. Messages have to be got over in new, up to date ways if they are to reach target groups such as young men and women. This cannot be done exclusively by central Government, though we endorse the approach of the Department for Transport's 'Think' campaign which seems to us to be well-targeted and successful in avoiding sounding like the voice of officialdom. **A whole range of other initiatives is needed to start to swing opinions, as has been done in the past with drink driving and seat belt wearing, and we suggest a number of possible ways of influencing behaviour.**

**Finding role models to bring their influence to bear is important, not just directly in fronting campaigns but also indirectly in highlighting particular issues in ways that strike home to target groups. 'Soaps' can also have an influence. We see a lot of scope for local initiatives by community groups, sporting clubs and so on; and we propose a bigger role for Local Road Safety Officers to coordinate and stimulate the whole range of local initiatives. We propose that the DfT should take on a role of disseminating and encouraging best practice, and in evaluating results.**

**Training and testing is also a key area.** The driving test is the one opportunity Government has to ensure new drivers are capable of being safe road users for the rest of their lives. We recognise that important changes have been made, notably the introduction of the written test, and we welcome the thought being given by the Driving Standards Agency to the question of life-long learning. **But the basic test has been unchanged for many years. We recommend that it would be worth reviewing the test to see whether it best meets current needs. We recommend that more attention should be given to testing the attitudes and behaviour of candidates. We generally support the suggestions put forward by the Association of British Insurers, in particular the idea of a structured learning programme for all new drivers. We also suggest the introduction of a log book for all learner drivers to underpin the structured learning process.**

**An active and visible enforcement effort by police presence, as well as by automatic devices, is essential for discouraging bad driver behaviour. We recommend that the Home Office should set police forces Performance Indicators in relation to road policing with an emphasis on targeting serious and serial offending to improve public safety and deny criminals the use of our roads.**

In our view, road policing would show a high benefit to cost ratio. To test this **we suggest that DfT and the Home Office should carry out a study of the cost-effectiveness of increasing the resources devoted to road policing by, say, 20% both in relation to its effectiveness in reducing casualty rates and wider criminal behaviour and its effectiveness as opposed to education and other road safety matters.** We do not propose diverting police resources from other priorities such as counter-terrorism or neighbourhood policing. But we do not regard the present level of resources

devoted to policing as immutable if good evidence can be produced for increasing it.

We also consider that **it would be very desirable for research to be conducted to examine the frequency with which bad and good driving behaviours occur and the characteristics of those who perform them; to assess the predictors of various types of good and bad behaviour and the extent to which these are similar across behaviours; and to devise and to test those interventions which might be useful in influencing or changing these behaviours.**

**A summary of recommendations is at Annex A.**

## 1: Introduction

- 1.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) asked the Motorists' Forum to consider how the Prime Minister's 'Respect' initiative might be applied to road user behaviour, as a contribution to their review of road safety. The Forum was asked in particular:
- to consider the factors that cause people to behave disrespectfully on the roads;
  - to consider the factors that cause people to behave in a respectful way when they are on the road and how such behaviour can be encouraged;
  - to consider the factors that are most influential in getting people to change their behaviour eg family, friends, the media (local and national newspapers, radio, TV and news bulletins, prime-time soaps and films), legislation, enforcement; and
  - to make recommendations.
- 1.2 The Forum set up a Working Group under the Chairmanship of David Holmes to advise on this matter. The Working Group consisted of the following members:-
- |                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| David Holmes                     | Chairman                     |
| Kevin Clinton                    | RoSPA                        |
| Professor Mark Conner            | University of Leeds          |
| Peter Davis                      | SMMT                         |
| Kevin Delaney/<br>Sheila Rainger | RAC Foundation               |
| Professor Andrew Evans           | Imperial College London      |
| Robert Gifford                   | FACTS                        |
| Andrew Howard                    | AA Motoring Trust            |
| Chief Supt. Kevin O'Leary        | ACPO                         |
| Rosemary Welch                   | LARSOA                       |
| Graham Pendlebury                | DfT adviser                  |
| Nikki Yorke                      | DfT adviser                  |
| Chris Watts                      | CfIT Secretary               |
| David Prescott                   | Motorists' Forum Secretary   |
| Joe Carey                        | Motorists' Forum Secretariat |
- 1.3 The study follows the report made by the group in August 2005 on road safety and the management of speed. Many of the members were on the earlier group. Additional members for the present study are Kevin Clinton, Professor Mark Conner and Rosemary Welch. Chief Supt. O'Leary was chosen as the ACPO representative for this

particular study. Nikki Yorke was nominated by the DfT as our adviser.

## **2: Background**

### **The 'Respect' Agenda**

- 2.1 The Government's campaign, launched by the Prime Minister, to tackle anti-social behaviour generally and to build 'respect' is being taken forward by the Respect Taskforce which is based in the Home Office and was formed in September 2005 out of the work of the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit. 'Respect', for this purpose, is defined as:

*"...the basic decencies in behaviour which should be the hallmark of all our encounters with others. That is the way we are treated, the way we treat others, our neighbours, our work colleagues, our public servants and our public spaces. It means tolerance and understanding of other people's needs. It means also a willingness to stand up for common decencies when they are being undermined."*

- 2.2 The Taskforce has developed a national action plan that sets out the steps required to build respect amongst people and communities. It focuses on six core areas: activities for children and young people; improving behaviour and attendance at school; supporting families; a new approach to the most challenging families; strengthening communities; and effective enforcement and community justice.

### **Respect on the road**

- 2.3 Bad - 'disrespectful' - behaviour on the road is of course an aspect of bad behaviour generally, but there are special features which suggest that it raises different issues. They are:
- a) as road vehicles are potentially lethal weapons, their construction, maintenance and use is regulated by the criminal law which contains a large number of detailed offences;
  - b) the way in which road users interact with one another is different from the way that people generally interact. Drivers are cocooned in metal boxes and they rarely communicate directly with one another. Motorcyclists are hidden behind visors. Communication is normally limited to a few mechanically produced signals, though motorists sometimes shout or make gestures; and
  - c) the notion of community is different. There are communities on the road, for example groups of motorcyclists; people taking part in rallies; or owners of certain kinds of cars such as 2CVs. But, by and large, drivers of other vehicles are, and want to remain, strangers to each other.

- 2.4 In addition, one interesting difference between bad behaviour on the road and bad behaviour generally is that the population of people behaving badly on the road is much wider. Otherwise law-abiding people may, on occasion, drive very inconsiderately by doing such things as tail-gating, blowing their horns, making rude gestures or shouting, whereas they would not behave in such ways when walking down the street. People who would never drop litter in any other environment will drop litter from their cars. Research carried out for the DfT<sup>1</sup> confirmed that people do not equate disrespect on the road with anti-social behaviour generally.
- 2.5 People who would not steal or commit other crimes break the speed limit regularly if they think they can get away with it and they are not causing danger. A survey by RAC suggested that 84% of drivers consider themselves to be law-abiding, but 55% admit to exceeding the speed limit by a little every day<sup>2</sup>. Over 1.9 million fixed penalties and prosecutions for speeding offences detected by cameras were handed out in 2004.
- 2.6 The Literature Review<sup>3</sup> of 'Respect on the Road' that the Motorists' Forum commissioned revealed that the term 'respect' did not seem to be used much in published research. Where people talked about 'respect' in the context of motoring it was usually in admiration of big, powerful cars or the status and superiority of those who own them. More important, there is the question whether a broad definition of what is meant by 'respect on the road' offers the most useful way into the problem of why people behave badly on the road and what can be done about it.
- 2.7 So how should we define 'respect on the road'? In our view, 'respect on the road' has two separate but related connotations. The first is obedience to the formal rules and regulations of the road, irrespective of whether the rules were approved of or thought to be relevant. Along with this concept goes respect for those who enforce the rules - police officers, parking attendants, and the other officials who have the power to issue warnings, penalties and so on - and a responsibility to maintain one's vehicle in a safe condition.
- 2.8 The second connotation is respect for other users of the road by recognising their rights and driving in a considerate and safe manner; by keeping one's own skills up to the standard required to drive safely; and by concentrating on the task of driving. Such respect would appear to be based on believing that one should treat others in a respectful way either because one would hope to be treated in a similar way or because it was believed that this is the right (or moral)

---

<sup>1</sup> Respect on the Road: Qualitative Research To Explore Public Attitudes Towards, And Participation In, Anti-Social Behaviour On The Roads – Cragg Ross Dawson 2006

<sup>2</sup> RAC Report on Motoring 2005

<sup>3</sup> Respect on the Road: Literature Review – Mott MacDonald.

thing to do. This concept of moral norms is explored further in Annex B.

- 2.9 So our view is that 'respect on the road' might be defined as **'compliance with the law, toleration of the mistakes of others (and recognition of one's own mistakes), and acceptance that the right to use the roads comes with a sense of responsibility to others'**.
- 2.10 For the reasons set out above, we do not believe that promoting a more 'respectful' - and safer - stance amongst drivers would benefit from any explicit link to the 'Respect' agenda being taken forward by the Home Office. We believe that study of how to promote 'respect on the road' will be pursued most usefully by looking at particular behaviours on the road rather than as a generic issue.
- 2.11 There is, however, a close correlation between criminal behaviour generally and the commission of serious traffic offences - see below. And measures such as education and enforcement may be elements in the treatment of both forms of criminal behaviour.

#### **What do we know about 'respectful' and 'disrespectful' behaviour on the road?**

- 2.12 Much useful research has been done into various aspects of driver behaviour. But the term 'respect' is not used much (perhaps because it is ill-defined); the research findings on particular behaviours do not all agree; and there is not much work on how frequently various sorts of bad behaviour occur and in what circumstances. More work has been published on the related subject of 'road rage', though there is no accepted definition of that either. The prevailing view seems to be that manifestations of impatience, aggression, anger and defiance of the law are most common among younger, male drivers who travel for high mileages. These behaviours include tail-gating, 'undertaking', going through red lights, racing and displaying hostility.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.13 As good and bad behaviour is not recorded in official statistics, for quantitative data and time series we have to look to DfT accident statistics and Home Office statistics on traffic offences. These are the best proxies that we can find for bad behaviour. We can also look at what drivers think about particular behaviours that they or others engage in.
- 2.14 Human factors play a major part in road accidents. From 2005, police forces nationally began to collect detailed information on contributory factors in accidents. There were 77 contributory factors

---

<sup>4</sup> Parker and Stradling '*Influencing driver attitudes and behaviour*' 2001; and Stradling and Meadows '*Highway code and aggressive violations in UK drivers*' 2000

used by the police. Analysis of the returns shows that the most common factors were respectively *failed to look properly* (32%); *failed to judge other person's path or speed* (18%); and *careless, reckless or in a hurry* (16%)<sup>5</sup>. When each of the 77 contributory factors were fitted into one of nine categories, the contributory factor category *driver/rider error or reaction* was the most frequently reported category, involved in 66% of all accidents. So human factors clearly play a role in accidents.

2.15 A further relevant piece of research is the Home Office study on the criminal histories of serious traffic offenders<sup>6</sup>. This showed that a high proportion of those convicted of serious traffic offences had criminal records, for example:

- a) disqualified drivers had criminal histories similar to those of mainstream criminals (mainstream criminal offences are defined as violence, burglary, robbery, theft and handling, criminal damage, drug offences).
- b) 50% of dangerous drivers had previous convictions, and a quarter was reconvicted within a year;
- c) drink driving is less closely associated with criminal behaviour. Nevertheless, drink drivers were about twice as likely to have previous convictions as would be expected in the general population and 40% of drink drivers had a criminal history;
- d) women were less likely to commit serious traffic offences - females made up only 8% of drink drivers, less than 3% of disqualified drivers and less than 5% of dangerous drivers. Among mainstream offenders, 13% were female.
- e) most dangerous and disqualified drivers were in the age range 18-32; drink drivers tended to be older.

2.16 Broughton (2003)<sup>7</sup> also demonstrated that the number of motoring and of non-motoring offences that a driver commits is linked. This confirmed the hypothesis that a driver's willingness to commit motoring offences tends to be associated with their willingness to commit mainstream non-motoring criminal offences. Later research - Broughton (2006)<sup>8</sup> - confirmed that the numbers of motoring and of non-motoring offences committed by individual drivers are strongly correlated.

---

<sup>5</sup> Robinson and Campbell 'Contributory factors to road accidents' DfT 2006

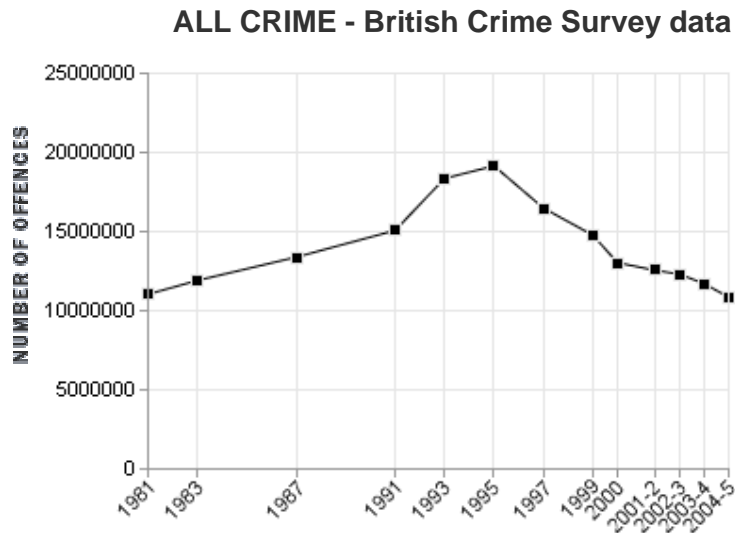
<sup>6</sup> Rose: Home Office Research Study 206, 2000

<sup>7</sup> Broughton J (2003): The number of motoring and non-motoring offences. TRL Report TRL562

<sup>8</sup> Broughton (J) (2006): The correlation between motoring offences and other types of offence. TRL Report TRL650

### 3: Are driving standards better or worse than they were?

3.1 It is often said that driving standards are worse than they were. But was there ever a golden age, when drivers were habitually courteous and considerate? It seems very doubtful that there was. Lord Montague, writing in *The Art of Driving a Motor Car* first published in 1906, obviously felt that there was a need to encourage better behaviour on the road. In a chapter entitled Road Maxims and Manners he said “a motorist cannot go far wrong if he drives like a gentleman; in other words with consideration for all”.



3.2 The British Crime Survey shows that total crime peaked in 1995, and has since fallen by 44%. Nevertheless, a public perception remains that behaviour generally in society has got worse. The evidence on whether standards of driving have fallen or not is equivocal. There are certainly fewer deaths than there were forty years ago. Despite a threefold increase in the number of cars, deaths on the road have more than halved since 1966. Of course, cars are much safer and there are better roads. But driver behaviour can be expected to have played a part.

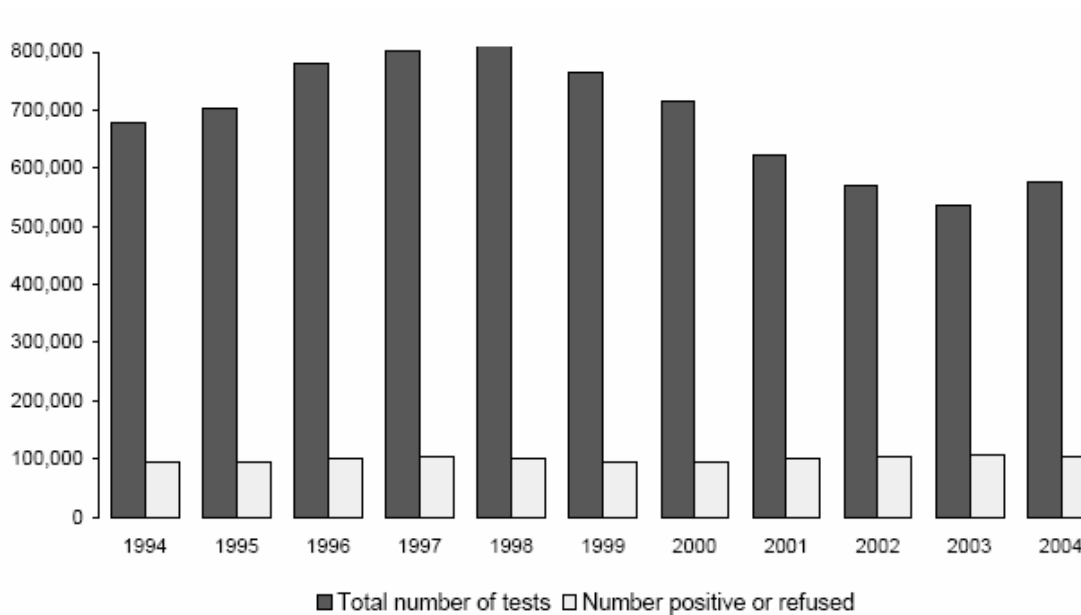
3.3 In considering driving standards it is important to distinguish between the ability to drive and control a car correctly and safely and having the right attitudes (including being calm and patient; being alert and looking out; and being considerate). Learner drivers now possess good control skills at the time of passing their driving test. And it appears that it is now harder to get a driving licence than it was: the pass rate has fallen from about 52% in 1990/91 to just under 43% in 2003/04.

- 3.4 On the other hand, TRL Report 643<sup>9</sup>: Monitoring Progress Towards the 2010 Casualty Reduction Target suggested from an analysis of car accident data that declining driving standards may have contributed to the increased severity of injuries to car occupants. Analyses of the new contributory factor data (see paragraph 2.14) have confirmed the high incidence of loss of control and excessive speed in fatal and serious car accidents that had previously been identified.
- 3.5 It can be argued that the increasing proportion of car occupants who were killed or seriously injured when their cars overturned points to a decline in driving standards (although changes to the car fleet such as the increasing proportion of 4x4s and people carriers may have contributed to this trend). However, care obviously needs to be exercised with this conclusion.
- 3.6 Not wearing a seat belt is not only foolish; it is against the law. Thames Valley Police data suggests that 30.6% of drivers, 30.2% of front seat passengers and 57% of rear seat passengers who were killed over a three year period were not wearing seat belts. Of these, the Police estimated that 60% would have survived had they been wearing their belts.
- 3.7 Estimates for 2005 suggest that 6% of all road casualties and 17% of road deaths occurred when someone was driving over the legal limit for alcohol. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the number of people killed or seriously injured in drink-drive accidents in Great Britain fell from over 9,000 to fewer than 3,000. During the past ten years, however, there has been no clear trend in the number killed or seriously injured, though the number has fluctuated from year to year. Provisional estimates for 2005 indicate a fall of 9 per cent from the previous year. The number of people killed in drink-drive accidents fell to a low of 460 deaths in 1998, but has since risen to an estimated 560 deaths in 2005. The numbers of slight injuries in drink drive accidents have been showing a broadly rising trend since 1993 but have fallen since 2002 and provisional figures for 2005 suggest a fall of 9 per cent from 2004.

---

<sup>9</sup> TRL Report 643: Monitoring Progress Towards the 2010 Casualty Reduction Target.

### Screening breath tests by outcome



- 3.8 From our necessarily brief review of the statistics, we see no clear indication whether driving standards are falling or not. It may well be that there is no general answer to the question whether standards are falling both because there is no precision about what the question means and there are no data that bear directly on it. A more useful question is whether specific sorts of behaviour - such as driving too close behind the vehicle in front - are becoming more or less common. No data are collected about that, but it would be possible to do so. The collection of such data is important if we are trying to measure the effect of remedial measures, publicity etc on the behaviour of drivers.
- 3.9 Though the evidence is ambiguous, the general view of motorists seems to be that driving standards are falling. A recent survey in *What Car* magazine reported that 79% of drivers believed driving standards had fallen, as opposed to just 9% who thought they had risen. (Interestingly, the poll revealed that almost half of those who took part believed that they were good drivers, with 47% thinking that their driving had improved over the past 12 months!).
- 3.10 We suggest that more work should be done to establish facts about, and trends in, driver behaviour. What has been done so far, and is being done now, is largely survey work and small-scale studies which are useful and important in themselves but do not provide a solid enough basis for the kind of action needed. Some possible ways in which the collection of data might be tackled include:

- Development of a standard series of questions to be asked via the British Crime Survey to see how the extent of bad - 'disrespectful' - behaviour on the road is changing over time, compared to other forms of criminal and anti-social behaviour;
- The Highways Agency's Road User Satisfaction Survey could include questions on drivers' perception about bad behaviour on the road; and
- Traffic monitoring systems such as those being installed on the motorways could be used to record incidents, near misses and dangerous behaviour.

We are aware that there could be privacy implications for this last proposal and suggest that such concerns should be considered as part of a national debate about what is acceptable in a monitoring context.

3.11 Another way of getting insight into driver behaviour is suggested by the US 100 car study. This work, which was carried out by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, aimed to find out how drivers actually behave behind the wheel when they think that no-one is watching them.

3.12 The study has provided excellent data on naturalistic driver behaviour, and reveals that nearly 80 per cent of crashes and 65 per cent of near-crashes involve some form of driver inattention within three seconds before the event. Primary causes of driver inattention are distracting activities, such as cell phone use, and drowsiness. US researchers have described the huge database developed through this study as 'enormously valuable in helping us to understand and prevent motor vehicle crashes'. The American results will not be directly applicable in the UK; but the DfT might like to consider carrying out a similar study here. It would be expensive, but only a small reduction in the number and cost of crashes would make it worthwhile.

#### **4: Types of behaviour**

4.1 Rather than seeking to define further the meaning of 'respect' and 'disrespect', we consider that effort should be devoted to particular behaviours that should be encouraged or discouraged. We would concentrate particularly on those behaviours that could be a contributory factor in a collision with another vehicle or with a pedestrian or cyclist. So, for example, driving at an inappropriate speed for the conditions should be discouraged because it is potentially harmful to the driver or others. Dangerous parking, for example is in the same category. Overstaying one's time at a parking

meter is against the rules and will be enforced by the local authority but it does not in itself contribute to accidents

- 4.2 The table below sets out our ideas about the sorts of behaviour that should be encouraged or discouraged. All behaviours that break road traffic laws should *ex hypothesi* be discouraged as should behaviours that do not in themselves break the law but can be shown to be associated with increased risk of causing harm to self or others. We have not specified in the disrespectful/bad table all the many illegal actions such as drinking and driving, drug driving etc. We note that drivers tend to have less regard for laws and regulations for which there is not an obvious safety purpose or where they believe they are being treated unreasonably<sup>10</sup>. The most effective laws in this area are those that reasonable people see the sense of and obey voluntarily. We are no longer a deferential society, if we ever were.
- 4.3 Our ideas about the types of behaviour that should be encouraged or discouraged are as follows. The list is illustrative and should not be viewed as definitive.

<b>Bad: to be discouraged</b>	<b>Good: to be encouraged</b>
Driving at an inappropriate speed.	Giving way when you should
Not allowing enough room to other road users (e.g. driving too close to bicycles)	Anticipation and awareness of what other people might do
Middle lane hogging	Letting people know what you are going to do
Bad lane discipline	Letting people in to flow of traffic
Not wearing a seat belt	Saying sorry
Using a mobile phone while driving	Letting pedestrians cross
Driving under impairment of drink and/or drugs	Acknowledgment of good behaviour
Dangerous overtaking	Being in control always
Pulling out without signaling	Taking a pride in one's driving
Not giving way to pedestrians	Being calm and patient
Driving too close behind the car in front	
Driving aggressively: eg 'cutting up' other drivers, gesturing, shouting	
Not anticipating what might happen by 'reading the road'	

<sup>10</sup> Respect on the Road: Qualitative Research To Explore Public Attitudes Towards, And Participation In, Anti-Social Behaviour On The Roads – Cragg Ross Dawson 2006

- 4.4 Attempts have been made to categorise types of disrespectful behaviour by reference to the person concerned rather than the outcome. The Cragg Ross Dawson research commissioned by the DfT suggested a classification into three types of disrespect on the road:
- **Active** disrespect for others and the law (comprising illegal and inconsiderate activities such as joyriding, driving without insurance, abandoning cars and double parking) that is perpetrated by an inconsiderate minority who demonstrate this type of behaviour both on and off the road;
  - **Reactive** disrespect for others (such as impatience and impersonal aggression) committed by the normally considerate majority in direct response to the on-road environment.
  - **Passive** disrespect which consists of 'lesser' but still illegal offences (driving whilst using a mobile, 'low level' speeding etc) committed by the majority who usually obey the law and authority in other situations, but disregard it where they cannot see that their actions, though illegal, would be likely to have adverse consequence.
- 4.5 The research also found that when people are in their cars, they have a higher threshold of acceptability (what people are prepared to do and have done to them), and are more prone to aggression and impatience, but at the same time made to feel more secure because of the anonymity of being in a car. This combination of factors makes people more likely to behave with less consideration than they otherwise would.
- 4.6 In addition, the research suggested that the majority of people see themselves as law abiding and courteous drivers, but are also happy to admit to various offences that might fall into the 'passive disrespect' category. This is because they do not see that such offences are unsafe. The researchers concluded that, generally, it is felt that flouting laws that do not have an obvious safety rationale is justifiable.
- 4.7 Such research is interesting, and relevant to the extent that it might help us to see what interventions might have some effect on reducing such behaviours.

## 5: **Who should we try to influence?**

- 5.1 There are some groups which casualty statistics suggest should be targeted. These include:-

### *Young Drivers*<sup>11</sup>:

- In 2005, almost 1200 young drivers were killed or seriously injured on UK roads - more than three every day;
- 17 - 20 year-old male drivers are almost ten times more likely to be killed or seriously injured than more experienced drivers;
- almost one in four passengers who has been seriously injured was travelling with a young driver at the time;
- 17 - 20 year-old male drivers are almost five times more likely to be involved in a road traffic accident involving a casualty than 30 - 59 year-old males; and
- the presence of friends in their car can both distract young drivers and encourage them to drive in a more risky way.

### *At-work drivers*<sup>12</sup>

- it is estimated that there are about 1000 deaths on UK roads each year involving people who were at work at the time, with a further 13000 seriously injured. In other words, between one-quarter and one-third of all road accidents involve someone who was working;
- employees who drive more than 25000 miles a year have at least a one in 8000 chance of dying behind the wheel of their company vehicle – a risk similar to that of miners dying at the coal face; and
- 65% of all company vehicles typically will be involved in an incident during a year.

### *Motorcyclists*<sup>13</sup>

- although motorcycles only account for 1% of road mileage, riders accounted for 20% of fatalities in 2003;
- motorcyclists are 40 times more likely to be killed than car drivers and 5 times more likely to be killed than cyclists.

5.2 As people get older, their driving skills can become impaired and older drivers have more accidents per mile driven than middle-aged drivers. However, older drivers are often aware of their increased vulnerability on the road and are likely to change their driving behaviour accordingly eg they avoid the riskiest driving situations by

---

<sup>11</sup> Young Drivers: Reducing Death On The Roads September 2006

<sup>12</sup> Improving Work-Related Road Safety: A study led by the Motorists' Forum May 2005

<sup>13</sup> Road Safety and Speed Management: A study led by the Motorists' Forum August 2005

driving slower, avoiding busy junctions and restricting their driving to daylight hours.

- 5.3 These facts suggest that any effort to change behaviour should be targeted at young men and women, at-work drivers and motorcyclists. However, some of these groups, particularly young men and women, are less likely to be influenced by statements from authority, and great subtlety and ingenuity is required.
- 5.4 We should also try to improve the behaviour of people not in these categories - ordinary people who on the whole are not reckless with their lives or the lives of others, and do not set out to flout the law. Such people do thoughtless things and behave aggressively and dangerously at times. And everyday experience suggests that bad and inconsiderate behaviour can provoke an aggressive reaction in others. Conversely, considerate behaviour on the road can be infectious: if someone lets us out of a road end when they need not do so, we may be more likely to behave considerately further down the road. And most people are subject to influence from some quarter - whether it be from parents, peers, girl- and boy-friends, teachers, spiritual leaders and characters in films or soap operas. The messages for different groups will vary; and for some it may have to be harsh. But no group should be neglected. The challenge is to find out what works with what group.

## 6: Research evidence

- 6.1 Although there is little existing research directly on respect on the road there has been research examining the bad driving behaviours that might constitute lack of respect on the road. **Annex B** (produced for this study by Professor Mark Conner) provides a brief summary of the psychological evidence in this area.
- 6.2 This research indicates that there are reliable and valid measures of many of the bad driving behaviours noted earlier. There is also research examining the attitudinal and motivational determinants of a number of these behaviours. Research on changing such behaviours is more limited, although recommendations have been developed in relation to the content of speed awareness courses. Annex B also suggests a number of areas for further research. We believe that this is a promising field of activity. It should be targeted towards specific objectives.

6.3 It would be very desirable, if it could be done, for research to be conducted to:

- examine the frequency with which bad and good driving behaviours occur and the characteristics of those who perform them. In particular, it would be useful to know more about the

distribution across the population and the extent to which the bad behaviours are performed by a limited number of persistent offenders;

- assess the predictors of various types of good and bad behaviour and the extent to which these are similar across behaviours; and
- devise and test those interventions which might be useful in influencing or changing these behaviours.

6.4 Such research might enable our road safety effort, from training and testing to publicity and campaigns, to be better targeted. In addition it might allow us to identify whether there are particular psychological profiles which are associated with various sorts of bad driving behaviour.

## **7: What can be done to encourage and recognise good driving**

7.1 The messages that need to be conveyed are hardly new: they have been obvious since the early days of motoring, and they applicable to a greater or lesser extent to all users of the roads. They centre on taking pride in driving; concentration; understanding the consequences of one's actions; patience, tolerance and consideration. The problem is that they sound pious and can sound pompous when delivered in anything sounding like an official pronouncement. The challenge is, therefore, to get these messages over in a new, up to date way - and in doing so, to raise progressively the standard of competence and behaviour of the whole driving population, including those not yet able to drive.

7.2 There are a number of different messages, to be got over to a wide variety of people. It will be necessary to use a wide variety of means to convey them, and to be subtle and ingenious in going about it. People do not like to be preached to or patronised; and those most in need of change are least likely to recognise that they need to change.

7.3 One should bear in mind that evaluation of methods of persuading people to change their behaviour is extremely difficult. We do not know what works. It should be the objective therefore to use a very wide range of methods and to try to evaluate results by doing different things in different areas and using control groups.

7.4 Our recommendations on how these problems might be tackled are set out in the following paragraphs.

## Communication between drivers

- 7.5 We have noted above that the vocabulary which drivers can use to communicate with one another is extremely limited. Drivers are cocooned within their own vehicle and rarely communicate directly with other drivers. This relative anonymity might, we suggest, lead drivers to treat others with less respect than if they met face to face: it might tend to depersonalise the relationship between drivers.
- 7.6 Moreover, even the limited vocabulary at present in use is ambiguous - and potentially dangerous. It is common practice for drivers to show that they are giving other drivers the right of way, and to thank other drivers for having given way to them, by flashing their headlights. But the Highway Code specifically says that headlights should only be flashed to let other road users know that you are there. This is the way that police drivers use their headlights. There is no officially recognised way for drivers to indicate that they are giving right of way to another driver; to thank other drivers for being considerate; or to apologise when one has caused inconvenience or danger. It seems to us a pity that the building blocks of elementary human communication are missing.

- 7.7 This is an area the DfT should consider exploring further. A first step might be to establish by public consultation or polling whether there are gaps in the recognised vocabulary. This might lead to a discussion about how any such gaps might be filled.

## Influencing behaviour

- 7.8 We recommend:
- a) a continuous series of campaigns focusing on different messages for different groups at different times. The current DfT 'Think' campaign is a good example of this, and the absence of an overt Government involvement seems helpful;
  - b) we should try to get other groups involved at national and local level. The medical profession is one example of a group who has a lot to gain given the fact that road accidents are a main cause of death and injury in the younger age groups; and that medical advice is probably the most effective way of communicating with the older age group;
  - c) for children, we should try oblique methods as well as the conventional classroom instruction eg computer games, such as the on-line road safety game Roadie Runner launched in October 2006. Some general teaching on road sense in the Schools Curriculum could also be useful;

- d) for young adults, we should look for role models - directly (eg Schumacher) or indirectly (eg Dirty Pretty Things) who have experience that gives them credibility to raise consciousness of particular messages. We do not envisage that one figure can be the focus of this third-party advocacy - the person selected needs to be appropriate for the group being targeted and to have the necessary cachet to address the group;
- e) for everyone, we should try to get messages into Soaps, both through situations in which accidents occur and by using well-known characters who have almost become family members. This may need a small special unit;
- f) we should try to create community involvement at local level to supplement and strengthen the efforts of Road Safety Officers.

Local communities asking for more enforcement, or speed reduction measures in their local communities can be asked to promote and sign up to **Make the Commitment Campaigns** (called Making the Pledge in some areas). This commitment requires drivers within a local community to respect other people's speed limits by always driving within the speed limits themselves. This commitment can be signed up to by individuals, companies, communities and can apply to both drivers and passengers.

There are also in some areas community groups that give young people experience in working on old cars: safe driving would fit in very naturally with this work.

Local conservation and civic groups could also be involved in some aspects of road safety. Such groups would best be approached at a local level.

- g) professional sportsmen and women, particularly footballers, are looked up to by many young adults. Many professional clubs now recognise that they have a community responsibility and already engage in activities with their local community. For example, Charlton Athletic FC use football as a learning vehicle and their community scheme has entered the classroom with football literacy and numeracy programmes and healthy lifestyle programmes. Sporting clubs could be approached, either individually or through their ruling bodies, to help raise awareness in this field.
- h) For those who drive as part of their work, employers should be encouraged to have a Health and Safety policy dealing with the risks of work-related driving in place, have a top-level commitment to work-related road safety in an organisation, have adequate systems in place for carrying out risk assessments and delivering training and monitor performance to ensure that a work-related road safety policy is effective.

- 7.9 Much of the activity we recommend needs to be initiated and coordinated locally, by professional people with imagination and clout. There a case for strengthening the Road Safety Officer role and in improving the status of the profession; giving them more resources to implement and evaluate initiatives; and having a national framework for exchange of information about evaluation and things that work. We propose a bigger role for DfT in disseminating and encouraging best practice.

### **Training and testing**

- 7.10 The driving test was initially introduced in the United Kingdom in 1935. And it remains important because it is the one opportunity Government has to ensure that new drivers are capable of being safe road users for the rest of their lives and also because it gives an opportunity to test a candidate's attitude and behaviour, as well as vehicle control skills.
- 7.11 Since the test's introduction, several amendments have been made to the test during the intervening years to keep it up-to-date and make it relevant to producing drivers capable of being safe road users in the 21st century. But there remain doubts about the whether the current test meets current needs as well as it should and we recommend that the test should be reviewed to see if it is the best that can be devised to ensure that people who pass are capable of driving in current conditions, and are likely to remain so.
- 7.12 The current theory test has about 20 questions that cover driver behaviour/attitude, although these questions are essentially designed to look at outcomes rather than attitude *per se*. We recommend that the content of the theory test should be looked at to see whether more questions can be asked that would illuminate the attitudes and behaviour of candidates.
- 7.13 The driving instructor industry is a very diverse sector, ranging from the 'one-person' operator through to the national driving schools that have many hundreds of instructors operating under their franchise. Standards of instruction obviously vary widely.
- 7.14 The role driving instructors play in teaching new drivers is crucial and it is essential that the quality of instruction given by each instructor should be constantly monitored. Tighter standards need to be put in place to weed out those with inadequate teaching skills and unsuitable attitudes. Driving instructors themselves need to be taught the importance of proper attitudes and behaviour, and how this should be dispensed to their pupils, in their own training.
- 7.15 We also see merit in the suggestion put forward recently by the Association of British Insurers that there should be a more structured programme of learning for young drivers before they take the driving

test. This could be underpinned by requiring learner drivers to have a completed logbook showing that the necessary stages in learning had been completed. There have been trials of such a scheme in the past. There are many details to be worked out, not least the question how the logbook is authenticated. But we think the idea is worth considering.

- 7.16 Drivers, having passed their driving test, typically continue to drive for over 50 years without ever getting any further training. Their skills, powers of concentration and physical abilities may deteriorate without their noticing. Many drivers, as they grow old, adapt what they attempt to their capabilities - for example, they may give up driving at night or making long journeys. We think it should be an objective to encourage drivers of all ages to look critically at their performance, and to consider regularly whether some aspect of their performance is in need of improvement by retraining.
- 7.17 Retraining courses exist, but they are not well publicised, and drivers are not regularly reminded of their existence and their value. We suggest that how to achieve the objective would be worth further study by the DfT with road safety organisations, representatives of driving schools, insurers and motoring organisations. The study could cover such questions as the length and content of the courses, including the setting of standards; how attitudes might be brought in; evaluation; publicity; and how incentives might be given to encourage their take-up. We do not recommend that such re-training should be compulsory except where ordered as a result of enforcement action but we would hope that responsible drivers would come to recognise the value of updating and refreshing their skills generally or perhaps at important points in their lives which change the amount or kind of driving they do - for example when they change jobs, have children, retire and so on.
- 7.18 Older drivers are perhaps most likely to be influenced by their relatives or doctors - the latter especially as older people are more likely to be killed or seriously injured in a crash as their bones are more brittle and their physique is generally weaker than when they were young. It would be desirable for older drivers to be able to take an advisory test of competence which would enable them to make up their own minds when they should take the step of giving up driving - which can mark a significant loss of independence. This is a subject of growing importance as the number of older drivers is expected to increase.

We recommend:

- a review of the driving test to see if it is the best that can be devised to ensure that people who pass are capable of driving in current conditions, and are likely to remain so;

- the content of the theory test should be looked at to see whether more questions can be asked that relate to the attitudes and behaviour of candidates;
- driving instructors should be taught the importance of proper attitudes and behaviour, and how this should be dispensed to their pupils;
- consideration should be given to a more structured programme of learning by young drivers underpinned by the completion of mandatory logbooks; and
- continuing training for drivers should be available and publicised. Further work should be done on the content of courses and incentives for drivers to take them

## **Enforcement**

- 7.19 Active, consistent and visible enforcement effort is essential for improving driver behaviour. Much more use is now made of automatic methods such as safety cameras and cameras to catch motorists contravening red traffic signals. These cameras cannot however have any influence on other forms of bad and dangerous behaviour such as tail-gating and swerving between lanes. A road police presence is necessary to discourage such behaviours, and the evidence is that when a police car is visible, drivers in general behave better.
- 7.20 Police forces have many priority tasks, and we are not suggesting that police effort should be diverted to road policing from activities such as counter-terrorism, tackling violent crime or neighbourhood policing. On the other hand, the fact that none of the targets set for police forces relates to road policing (except a singular 10 year performance indicator to reduce the number of those killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions) suggests that it has a low priority. We suggest that the Home Office should set for police forces Performance Indicators in relation to road policing with an emphasis on targeting serious and serial offending to improve public safety and deny criminals the use of our roads.
- 7.21 The total resources available for policing are determined by Ministers in their periodic decisions on public expenditure. They could no doubt be increased if a strong case were made. We suggest that it would be useful to carry out a study of the cost-effectiveness of increasing the resources devoted to road policing by, say, 20%, both in relation to its effectiveness in reducing casualty rates and wider criminal behaviour and its effectiveness as opposed to education and other road safety matters.

- 7.22 The Transport Committee's recently issued report on Roads, Policing and Technology<sup>14</sup> states that roads policing requires specialised knowledge and skills, specific training and equipment. It notes that while the practice of treating roads policing as a secondary or additional duty of officers engaged in other activities offers Chief Constables a high degree of flexibility in how they use their officers, there is a significant danger that it will lead in the longer-term to a reduced priority for roads policing. The Committee concludes that the special role of roads police officers must be recognised and protected, and the high standards of roads policing - which have helped the UK's roads to be among the safest in the world - must be maintained. In our view, the case which the Committee puts forward would be strengthened by the study we have recommended of the cost-effectiveness of increasing the resources devoted to roads policing.
- 7.23 It is clear to us that there is a motoring underclass who are not prepared to obey road traffic law and who wilfully flout the law as regards registering, taxing and insuring their car and driving whilst properly licensed. Those who commit serious motoring offences also tend to be people with histories of serious mainstream criminal behaviour - see paragraph 2.15.
- 7.24 Enforcement needs to be targeted where it will give best results. For example, a recent Roads Policing Operation Report<sup>15</sup> confirmed that on-road insurance enforcement will also catch unlicensed drivers and those with no MOT. New enforcement measures, such as extending the powers to seize vehicles, should be introduced. Government should not shy away from taking such action as a means of imposing quicker and more appropriate justice for those who deliberately drive outside the law.
- 7.25 When a person is involved in a road traffic incident and evidence is collated by the police which indicates that they have been driving without due care and attention or reasonable consideration to other road users, the person involved is given an option to either have the incident referred to the Crown Prosecution Service, where they may receive a fine and penalty points, or an opportunity to attend a Driver Improvement Course. Similarly, those caught driving a little over the speed limit can be offered the opportunity to attend a Speed Awareness Course.
- 7.26 Evaluation of such courses is still in progress since they are a fairly recent development. But there are indications that attendance on properly designed and conducted courses can have a positive effect on offenders, who respond to the opportunity to improve their driving, rather than simply being punished. We recommend those Police

---

<sup>14</sup> Roads Policing and Technology: Getting the right balance.

<sup>15</sup> V79 – 2006. Roads Operation Report 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006

Forces who have yet to introduce Speed Awareness Courses should do so at the earliest opportunity.

- 7.27 Some police authorities also now conduct joint Enforcement/Education days at locations where accidents or a level of offending have been identified. Police stop drivers who are not complying with a range of traffic laws, eg not wearing seat-belts, using a mobile phone. Drivers are either given a fine or offered the opportunity to go to a mobile classroom for a one to one or a group session with Road Safety Officers. The Officers provide information relating to the offenders' behaviour and challenge their attitude to offending.
- 7.28 More attention should be given to the psychology of serious traffic offenders and repeat offenders. Driving is a privilege which must be earned, not an inalienable right. Some repeat and serious offenders should be banned from driving for life, with very severe penalties for disqualified drivers.

We recommend:

- the Home Office should set for police forces Performance Indicators in relation to road policing with an emphasis on targeting serious and serial offending to improve public safety and deny criminals the use of our roads;
- a study should be carried out of the cost-effectiveness of increasing the resources devoted to road policing by, say, 20% both in relation to its effectiveness in reducing casualty rates and wider criminal behaviour and its effectiveness as opposed to education and other road safety matters;
- the introduction of new enforcement measures, such as extending the powers to seize vehicles;
- greater use of Driver Improvement Schemes and Speed Awareness Courses; and
- greater use of life bans by the courts for repeat and serious offenders.

### **Incentives**

- 7.29 Incentives can be just as effective as punishments and persuasion in helping to influence behaviour. The insurance industry has a key role to play as its everyday business involves assessing risks associated with particular individuals. It already offers incentives for motorists to

undertake effective training courses and to drive safely but we hope that the industry will continue to develop new insurance products that encourage, and reward, careful driving and continual improvement in driving skills.

- 7.30 Through the legal system, the State punishes those who break motoring laws. However, it does not reward those who have unblemished records. We see no reason why incentives should only be given by private organisations. Safer, more responsible, driving is in the interests of society in general, and we suggest that the Government might consider whether this could be recognised through the taxes that motorists have to pay. For example, drivers who maintain a clean licence for 10 years might get a year's free VED. Obviously any scheme would present problems that would need to be solved; our point is that the Government should recognise that incentives can play a useful part, and should consider what incentives it can offer to safe and responsible drivers.

We recommend:

- the insurance industry should continue to develop new insurance products that encourage, and reward, careful driving and continual improvement in driving skills; and
- Government should explore the incentives it can offer to safe and responsible drivers.

## **Self Help**

- 7.31 The Literature Review commissioned by the Forum drew attention to work that had been done on how to avoid becoming a victim or a perpetrator of road rage or aggressive driving. There are also a number of 'self help' websites which show drivers the best way to avoid road rage. These include not only motoring and safety organisations but also firms such as Microsoft. We commend this interest in reducing conflict on the road, and we hope that more firms and organisations will follow suit.

- 7.32 We have included some of the relevant advice at **Annexes C to F** as they contain a series of practical measures that drivers can take to calm aggressive driving.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 There are still far too many deaths and injuries on the road to be tolerable in a civilised society. Human error is a contributory factor in a high proportion of collisions - probably about two-thirds. If we could find ways of persuading drivers to drive with more consideration for

the safety of themselves and others - in others words with more 'respect' - there would be far fewer casualties; and driving would be a less stressful and more pleasant experience than it sometimes is now. How to influence driver behaviour is a challenge as old as the motor car itself. We have looked at the latest experience and research to see if we could identify new approaches to the problem.

- 8.2 Bad behaviour on the roads has obvious connections with anti-social behaviour generally, which is the subject of the 'Respect' work being taken forward by the Home Office. The links between serious traffic offences and criminal behaviour generally are worth further work, building on the research already done. And issues such as education and enforcement are part of the solution to both sorts of behavioural problems. But the differences in the legal framework and the measures that are possible in each area are sufficiently large to make it sensible for 'respect on the road' to be considered as a separate issue. The Home Office work has now seen 'parenting' as a key issue to be tackled. Rather than try to deal with 'respect on the road' as an aspect of the broad 'Respect' agenda, or even as a generic problem about conduct on the road, we think it more practical to consider how individual behaviours, whether good or bad, can be influenced.
- 8.3 This study has not been able to establish any clear indication as to whether driving standards are falling or not. But standards are still not high enough and with the ever reducing amount of road space available to each motorist and the modern high technology based vehicle, high standards of competence and awareness become ever more important. We think that monitoring trends in different types of driver behaviour would be useful in evaluating whether particular interventions are working, and in planning new measures. So we suggest that more work should be done to establish facts about, and trends in, driver behaviour and we have put forward a number of possible ways of collecting the necessary data.
- 8.4 We believe that it is not only necessary to discourage and if necessary penalise bad behaviour but also to encourage and recognise good driving. Positive incentive systems can be more useful than coercion or punishment in encouraging drivers to drive responsibly and we should like to see the Government consider positive incentives for those who drive responsibly and safely.
- 8.5 It will not be a simple task to persuade people to change behaviour. Messages have to be got over in new, up to date ways if they are to reach target groups such as young men and women. This cannot be done exclusively by central Government, though we endorse the approach of the Department for Transport's 'Think' campaign which seems to us to be well-targeted and successful in avoiding sounding like the voice of officialdom. A whole range of other initiatives is needed to start to swing opinions, as has been done in the past with

drink driving and seat belt wearing, and we suggest a number of possible ways of influencing behaviour.

- 8.6 Finding role models to bring their influence to bear is important, not just directly in fronting campaigns but also indirectly in highlighting particular issues in ways that strike home to target groups. 'Soaps' can also have an influence. We see a lot of scope for local initiatives by community groups, sporting clubs and so on; and we propose a bigger role for Local Road Safety Officers to coordinate and stimulate the whole range of local initiatives. We propose that the DfT should take on a role of disseminating and encouraging best practice, and in evaluating results.
- 8.7 Training and testing is also a key area. The driving test is the one opportunity Government has to ensure new drivers are capable of being safe road users for the rest of their lives. We recognise that important changes have been made, notably the introduction of the written test, and we welcome the thought being given by the Driving Standards Agency to the question of life-long learning. But the basic test has been unchanged for many years. We recommend that it would be worth reviewing the test to see whether it best meets current needs. We recommend that more attention should be given to testing the attitudes and behaviour of candidates. We generally support the suggestions put forward by the Association of British Insurers, in particular the idea of a structured learning programme for all new drivers. We also suggest the introduction of a log book for all learner drivers to underpin the structured learning process.
- 8.8 An active and visible enforcement effort by police presence, as well as by automatic devices, is essential for discouraging bad driver behaviour. We recommend that the Home Office should set police forces Performance Indicators in relation to road policing with an emphasis on targeting serious and serial offending to improve public safety and deny criminals the use of our roads.
- 8.9 In our view, road policing would show a high benefit to cost ratio. To test this we suggest that DfT and the Home Office should carry out a study of the cost-effectiveness of increasing the resources devoted to road policing by, say, 20% both in relation to its effectiveness in reducing casualty rates and wider criminal behaviour and its effectiveness as opposed to education and other road safety matters. We do not propose diverting police resources from other priorities such as counter-terrorism or neighbourhood policing. But we do not regard the present level of resources devoted to policing as immutable if good evidence can be produced for increasing it.
- 8.10 We also consider that it would be very desirable for research to be conducted to examine the frequency with which bad and good driving behaviours occur and the characteristics of those who perform them; to assess the predictors of various types of good and bad behaviour

and the extent to which these are similar across behaviours; and to devise and to test those interventions which might be useful in influencing or changing these behaviours.

**9: Summary of recommendations**

9.1 A summary of recommendations is at **Annex A**.

**10: Code of Practice for Scientific Committees**

10.1 The Working Group was selected to reflect opinion across this issue as widely as possible. However, no guarantee can be made that all instances or opinions have been taken into account in the Panel's work, nor that conclusions reached and published are incontrovertible.

*Motorists' Forum  
January 2007*

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Development of a standard series of questions to be asked via the **British Crime Survey** to see how the extent of bad - 'disrespectful' - behaviour on the road is changing over time, compared to other forms of criminal and anti-social behaviour (para 3.10).
- The possible inclusion in the **Highways Agency's Road User Satisfaction** Survey of questions on drivers' perception about bad behaviour on the road (para 3.10)
- **Traffic monitoring systems** could be used to record incidents, near misses and dangerous behaviour (para 3.10)
- **DfT** should consider carrying out a study into how drivers actually behave behind the wheel when they think that no-one is watching them (para 3.12)
- Consideration should be given to **research** being conducted into:
  - the frequency with which bad and good driving behaviours occur and the characteristics of those who perform them. In particular, it would be useful to know more about the distribution across the population and the extent to which the bad behaviours are performed by a limited number of persistent offenders;
  - the predictors of various types of good and bad behaviour and the extent to which these are similar across behaviours; and
  - those interventions which might be useful in influencing or changing these behaviours (all para 6.3)
- **DfT** should consider establishing by public consultation or polling whether there are gaps in the recognised vocabulary which drivers use to communicate with each other (para 7.7)

*Influencing behaviour*

- The establishment of a continuous series of **campaigns** aimed at influencing driver behaviour focusing on different messages for different groups at different times (para 7.8)
- The involvement of **other groups** at national and local level in such campaigns (para 7.8)
- **Influencing children** by **oblique methods eg computer games** as well as conventional classroom instruction (although some

general teaching on road sense in the Schools Curriculum could be useful) (para 7.8)

- Using **role models** to influence young adults (para 7.8)
- Getting messages into **Soaps**, both through situations in which accidents occur and by using well-known characters who have almost become family members (para 7.8)
- Creating **community involvement** at local level to supplement and strengthen the efforts of Road Safety Officers (para 7.8)
- Using **professional sportsmen and women** and **professional clubs** to engage in activities with their local community to help raise awareness in this field (para 7.8)
- Encouraging **employers** to have effective policies in place to safeguard those who drive as part of their work (para 7.8)

#### *Training and Testing*

- A **review of the driving test** to see if it is the best that can be devised to ensure that people who pass are capable of driving in current conditions, and are likely to remain so (para 7.11)
- Considering **the content of the theory test** to see whether more questions can be asked that relate to the attitudes and behaviour of candidates (para 7.12)
- Teaching **driving instructors** the importance of proper attitudes and behaviour, and how this should be dispensed to their pupils (para 7.14)
- Consideration should be given to a **more structured programme of learning** for young drivers underpinned by the completion of **mandatory logbooks** by learner drivers (para 7.15)
- **Continuing training** for drivers should be available and publicised (para 7.16)
- **DfT** should undertake further work with interested bodies on the content of courses and incentives for drivers to take them (para 7.17)

#### *Enforcement*

- **The Home Office** should set for police forces **Performance Indicators in relation to road policing with an emphasis on**

**targeting serious and serial offending to improve public safety and deny criminals the use of our roads.** (para 7.20)

- A study should be carried out of the **cost-effectiveness of increasing the resources devoted to road policing** by, say, 20% both in relation to its effectiveness in reducing casualty rates and wider criminal behaviour and its effectiveness as opposed to education and other road safety matters. (para 7.21)
- The introduction of **new enforcement measures**, such as extending the powers to seize vehicles (para 7.24)
- Greater use of **Driver Improvement Schemes and Speed Awareness Courses (SAC)** and the introduction of SAC by Police Forces who have yet to introduce them at the earliest opportunity (para 7.26)
- Greater use of **life bans** by the courts for repeat and serious offenders (para 7.28)

*Incentives*

- **the insurance industry** should continue to develop new insurance products that encourage, and reward, careful driving and continual improvement in driving skills (para 7.29)
- Government should explore the **incentives** it can offer to safe and responsible drivers (para 7.30)

**PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND -**

**A paper drafted by Professor Mark Conner, University of Leeds**

There is currently a lack of research directly on respect on the road either within the psychology literature or more broadly. However, there are a number of useful isolated studies and research on related behaviours that may have value that are overviewed here. In particular, relevant research on errors, lapses and violations; driver attitudes measures; driving aggression; predictors of driving behaviours (intentions, attitudes, social pressure, perceived control, anticipated regret, moral norms); and interventions for changing behaviours (downstream and upstream interventions) is briefly reviewed. In the final section some recommendations for research in this area are made.

**Driving Measures Relevant to Respect on the Road**

Although there is little research directly concerned with respect on the road there has been work developing measures of driving behaviours and attitudes that appears relevant to understanding respect on the road. The first such work has developed a Driver Behaviour Questionnaire (DBQ; Reason et al., 1990). The DBQ distinguishes between various driving-related errors, lapses and violations. Errors refer to the failure of planned actions to achieve their intended consequences (e.g., Underestimate the speed of an oncoming vehicle when overtaking). Lapses refer to departures of planned actions from some satisfactory path towards a desired goal (e.g. Attempt to drive away from traffic lights in third gear). Violations are defined as deliberate deviations from those practices believed necessary to maintain safe driving (e.g. become impatient with a slow driver in the outer lane and overtake on the inside). A self-report questionnaire has been developed to tap each of these components. It is clear that most, if not all, the violations used in the DBQ would be classed as disrespectful driving behaviours, while the vast majority of lapses would not. Mistakes fall into a middle category with some unlikely to be judged disrespectful (e.g. Get into the wrong lane as a roundabout or approaching a junction) while others might be more likely to be judged as disrespectful (e.g., Misjudge your crossing interval when turning right and narrowly miss collision). Nevertheless, it is clear that a measure of DBQ-violations could usefully be used to as a validated measure to monitor a range of disrespectful driving behaviours.

A related measure is the Driver Attitude Questionnaire (DAQ), which is a self-report questionnaire designed to tap attitudes towards various aspects of driving including drink driving, close-following, dangerous overtaking, and speeding (Parker et al., 1996). Each of which might be considered important aspects of disrespectful driving. Rather than tapping engagement in the behaviour as the DBQ attempts to do, the DAQ taps the individual's evaluation of the behaviour as positive or negative. This

may be useful because the attitudes that the DAQ taps are held to be more amenable to change through persuasive messages, yet likely to also lead to corresponding behaviour change. The DBQ and DAQ measures may be useful measures that could be employed in relation to assessing aspects of disrespectful driving or the value of interventions to change such behaviours. Interestingly in this regard a recent study (Conner & Lai, 2005) assessed the impact of an on-road and classroom based intervention offered to drivers liable to prosecution for dangerous driving (the National Driver Improvement Scheme) on DBQ and DAQ scores. The study indicated the scheme to significantly reduce levels of self-reported errors, lapses, violations and driver attitudes in those attending the scheme compared to those not attending and these differences to be maintained over periods as long as 12 months. Similar findings have been reported in classroom based interventions offered to those exceeding the speed limit by modest amounts as an alternative to prosecution (Fylan et al., 2006). Thus it would appear that interventions that effectively tackle some aspects of disrespectful driving (as tapped by the DBQ and DAQ) are currently available. We return to interventions later in this section.

### Driving Aggression

It is possible that a number of disrespectful driving behaviours may be the result of aggression (e.g. swearing/shouting at other drivers). Research indicates that driving violations (assessed by the DBQ) are higher in drivers with high levels of aggression (Lawton et al., 1997) and that drivers who are aggressive on the road are also aggressive in other aspects of their lives (Lajunen & Parker, 2001; Ward et al., 1998). Aggressive individuals are also more physiologically reactive to provocative stimuli (Malta et al., 2001) and recent research has shown prison populations to view driving aggression (e.g., obscene gesturing) as less severe than members of the public (Smith et al., 2006). Several measures of driver aggression have been developed (Driver Aggression Scale: Lajunen et al., 1998; Driver Violence Inventory: Ward et al., 1998) and might be used to identify individuals more likely to engage in particular aggression-related disrespectful driving behaviours. However, it is not clear what would constitute the most effective means of intervention with such groups. The developing and testing of interventions for driver aggression would be a useful direction for future research.

### Predictors of Driving Behaviours

A variety of research has been conducted with the aim of identifying the predictors of various driving behaviours (e.g., see Fylan et al., 2006 for a recent review in relation to speeding). Studies have linked driving behaviours such as speeding to demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and driving experience (e.g., French et al., 1993; Stradling, 2000). However, there has been less research relating driving behaviours to potentially modifiable motivational variables. One potentially useful and prominent model of the motivational influences on behaviour that has been employed in the driving area is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB; Ajzen, 1991). The TPB proposes that intentions and perceived behavioural

control (PBC) are the proximal determinants of behaviour. Intentions reflect the cognitive representation of an individual's readiness to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). PBC describes the individuals' perception of the ease or difficulty of performing any given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) or confidence they have in performing the behaviour under different conditions (sometimes referred to as self-efficacy). Intentions are influenced by three additional factors. Attitudes, subjective norms, and PBC are direct determinants of intentions. Attitudes towards a behaviour reflect the degree of positive or negative evaluation the individual has towards performing the behaviour. Subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in a behaviour. The relative importance of intentions and PBC in predicting behaviour is assumed to differ across behaviours and populations, as can the importance of attitudes, subjective norms and PBC in the prediction of intentions. Underlying attitudes, subjective norms and PBC are beliefs that can form useful targets for interventions designed to change behaviour (see Hardeman et al., 2001).

A number of studies have applied the TPB to various driving behaviours that might be considered disrespectful. These include drivers propensity to speed, dangerously overtake, drink and drive, follow closely, recklessly weave, recklessly cut in, run red traffic lights, flash at vehicles in front, and engage in retaliatory/initiatory violations (see Conner et al., in press for a review). In general this research indicates the power of intentions to predict such behaviours and that attitudes, norms, and perceived control emerge as significant predictors of such intentions. For example, Conner et al. (in press, study 2) showed intentions to be the sole TPB predictor of objectively assessed speeding on the road, but attitudes, norms and perceived control to be predictors of such intentions to speed, with attitudes being the strongest predictor. This research would suggest the value of attempts to change such behaviours through changing underlying intentions, attitudes, norms and perceived control. Research has attempted this with some success in relation to speeding behaviour through the development of videos designed to tackle underlying beliefs (Parker et al., 1996). Further research examining the power of motivational interventions to change other disrespectful driving behaviours may be warranted.

Research with the TPB has also highlighted other factors that have impacts on driving behaviours. Two such factors that may be relevant in relation to disrespectful driving behaviours are anticipated regret and moral norms (Parker et al., 1995). Anticipated regret is a negative, cognitive based emotion that is experienced when we realize or imagine that the present situation could have been better had we acted differently. Studies have shown that over and above the components of the TPB, anticipated regret adds to the predictions of intentions to commit driving violations (Conner et al., in press; Parker et al., 1995). A number of disrespectful driving behaviours might be expected to engender such feelings of regret (e.g., close following). As such it would be useful for future research to examine whether making anticipated regret about such behaviours more

salient might strengthen individuals intentions not to engage in such behaviours. Research with health behaviours (e.g., Abraham & Sheeran, 2003) suggest this might be an effective means to change the behaviour of those likely to experience regret.

Moral climate is created by shared belief that doing something is inherently “right” or “wrong”, without regard to the benefits or costs to self. An example of the importance of moral climate is provided by the case of drink-driving, where the combination of education, legislation, and enforcement has changed moral norms concerning the behaviour. There is now a prevalent belief that drink-driving is *morally* wrong – a radical change since 1967. This moral climate, in turn, helps to support strong sanctions. Research in this area has focused on moral norms (Manstead, 2000). Moral norms are the individual’s perception of the moral correctness or incorrectness of performing a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and take account of, “... personal feelings of...responsibility to perform, or refuse to perform, a certain behavior” (Ajzen, 1991, p.199). Moral norms might be expected to have an important influence on the performance of those behaviours with a moral or ethical dimension (e.g., Beck & Ajzen, 1991). Various driving behaviours may constitute such behaviours because of the potential for causing harm to oneself and others (Parker et al., 1995). Indeed recent research on speeding indicated moral norms and intentions to speed to be the only significant predictors of objectively assessed speeding in two studies (Conner et al., in press). In addition, other research has indicated that intentions that are based on moral norms tend to be more predictive of behaviour (Godin et al., 2005).

Changing moral norms requires people to accept that a particular behaviour has negative outcomes for others, to take personal responsibility for these outcomes, and to care about these outcomes for others. However, little research has targeted moral norms in order to change behaviour. Increasing the salience of such constructs may be one way to produce behaviour change. An alternative is to target individual basic values. For example, research has indicated that when people are given an opportunity to develop their own reasons for possessing a value (e.g., helpfulness), they subsequently exhibit much more pro-value behaviour in such situations (Maio et al., 2001). Further studies of interventions that target moral norms and observe effects on driving behaviours are required.

### Interventions for Changing Driving Behaviours

Whilst there is an extensive literature on behaviour change there is not at present a consensus on the most effective means of achieving behaviour change (Conner & Norman, 2005; Maio et al., 2006; Rutter & Quine, 2001). Nevertheless recent reviews of the literature (Fylan et al., 2006) which sought to derive lessons for changing speeding behaviour provide some useful insights that might be applied to changing disrespectful driving behaviours. In such a review, Fylan et al. (2006) concluded that effective interventions should target:

- Attitudes (beliefs and values) towards speeding, taking into account individual drivers' readiness to change, and increasing their motivation to drive at an appropriate speed.
- Beliefs about the acceptability and ubiquity of speeding (norms).
- Perceptions of responsibility for each driver's choice of speed (attributions).
- Perceptions of the benefits of speeding (response costs)
- Perceptions of the likelihood of drivers being detected if they speed (susceptibility).
- Negative consequences of crashing or being caught speeding (anticipated regret).
- Perceived barriers to driving at an appropriate speed (perceived behavioural control).
- The way in which speeding makes drivers feel (affective beliefs)
- Drivers' perceptions of their ability to drive at an appropriate speed (self-efficacy).
- When and where drivers will reduce their speed (implementation intentions).

Fylan et al. also suggest that interventions might be designed to:

- undermine the perception that speeding is associated with benefits: do you really get there quicker? do you really get ahead of other traffic?
- promote the idea that there are costs, other than crashing, associated with speeding: less money to spend because of a speeding fine; having to rely on other people to drive you around because you are banned from driving.
- promote the idea that drivers have control over the speed they adopt and that barriers to driving slowly are easy to overcome: it is easy to take your foot off the accelerator; a skilled driver is one who drives at the appropriate speed; leave yourself plenty of time to get to your destination.
- undermine the effect of normative pressure on driving fast: how cool is it to drive fast to impress a friend? are you sure your mates are really impressed by your fast driving? are you one of the herd or are you a skilled driver who adopts an appropriate speed?
- promote the affective benefits of driving more slowly: feeling less anxious; feeling in control; feeling less stressed.

The Fylan et al. report indicated that perceived control (or self-efficacy) may be a particularly important target because of its strong association with behaviour and the fact that there is good evidence about how to intervene effectively (e.g., persuasion, experience with behaviour). It was also suggested that persuasive messages to address the above targets should be paired with strategies that promote elaboration (e.g., group discussion).

Many of these recommendations seem equally applicable to a range of disrespectful driving behaviours. However, further research is needed to

specifically address the value of these intervention strategies in relation to a range of disrespectful driving behaviours. For example, some strategies might be more effective for some disrespectful behaviour (e.g., close following) but not for others (e.g., swearing and shouting at other drivers). In addition, we need to know more about the effectiveness of these strategies across the full range of drivers. It may be that these strategies are effective for the vast majority of law abiding drivers who only occasionally behave in a disrespectful manner on the road, but that other individuals are less open to such interventions. The latter group might more effectively be targeted by prosecution. Fylan et al. (2006) make similar comments in relation to speeding behaviour distinguishing between four different sub-types of speeding drivers: unintentional speeders; moderate occasional speeders; habitual high speeders; and socially deviant drivers. They suggest that while the behaviour of the latter two groups might be most appropriately addressed by prosecution. Although they also note the difficulty in distinguishing groups based on observed speed.

### Recommendations for Research

There is clearly a need for further research in this area. We would highlight the following areas:

- Studies of the frequency of disrespectful driving behaviours
- Studies of the determinants of disrespectful driving behaviours
- Tests of interventions to change disrespectful driving behaviours.

In relation to the first area it is worth pointing out that we appear to have relatively little systematic data about the frequency with which various disrespectful behaviours are performed. We also need to know more about whether the behaviours are relatively independent or tend to be performed by the same individuals. Research is also needed to address the impacts of these behaviours (e.g., on accidents, on annoyance to other road users, etc.). This research could then usefully inform the identification of the key disrespectful driving behaviours.

In relation to determinants we need research on examining the importance of various factors in predicting who performs these behaviours. One strand of such research could usefully examine whether these disrespectful behaviours are predominantly performed by small groups of individuals with particular characteristics (e.g., high in driver aggression). Another strand of research could usefully examine the extent to which research on driving behaviours such as speeding generalises to various disrespectful driving behaviours. Finally, in relation to the last area of research, we need research to identify effective means of changing disrespectful driving behaviours. Such research needs to identify what interventions are effective for what behaviours and the extent to which effectiveness varies across different types of drivers. In this regard it may be useful to examine the effectiveness of current interventions for behaviours such as speeding (e.g., the Driver Improvement Scheme, Speed Awareness Courses)

already have impacts on other disrespectful driving behaviours or could be adapted to do so.

### References

- Abraham, C., & Sheeran, P. (2003). Evidence that anticipated regret strengthens intentions, enhances intention stability, and improves intention-behaviour consistency. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, **42**, 495-511.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behaviour & Human Decision Processes*, **50**, 179-211.
- Beck, L., & Ajzen, I. (1991). Predicting dishonest actions using the Theory of Planned Behavior. *Journal of Research in Personality*, **25**, 285-301.
- Conner, M., & Lai, F. (2005). Evaluation of the effectiveness of the National Driver Improvement Scheme. *Road Safety Research Report No. 64*. London: Department for Transport.  
[www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_rdsafety/documents/page/dft\\_rdsafety\\_610571.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_610571.pdf)
- Conner, M., Lawton, R., Parker, D., Chorlton, K., Manstead, A.S.R., & Stradling, S. (in press). Using the Theory of Planned Behavior to Predict Speeding Behaviour. *British Journal of Psychology*.
- Conner, M. & Norman, P. (2005) (Eds.) *Predicting health behaviour: Research and practice with social cognition models* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edn.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- French, D., West, R., Elander, J., & Wilding, J.(1993). Decision making style, driving style and self-reported involvement in road traffic accidents. *Ergonomics*, **36**, 627-644.
- Fylan, F., Hempel, S., Grunfeld, B., Conner, M., & Lawton, R. (2006). Effective interventions for speeding motorists. *Road Safety Research Report No. 66*. London: Department for Transport.  
[www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_rdsafety/documents/page/dft\\_rdsafety\\_611335.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_611335.pdf)
- Godin, G., Conner, M., & Sheeran, P. (2005). Bridging the Intention-Behavior "Gap": The Role of Moral Norm. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, **44**, 497-512.
- Hardeman, W., Johnston, M., Johnston, D., Bonetti, D, Wareham, N.J., & Kinmonth, A.L. (2002). Application of the theory of planned behaviour in behaviour change interventions: A systematic review. *Psychology and Health*, **17**, 123-158.
- Lajunen, T., & Parker, D. (2001). Are aggressive people aggressive drivers? A study of the relationship between self-reported general aggressiveness, driver anger and aggressive driving. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, **33**, 243-255.
- Lajunen, T., Parker, D., & Stradling, S. (1998). Dimensions of driver anger, aggressive and highway-code violations and their mediation by safety orientation in UK drivers. *Transportation Research Part F*, **1**, 107-121.
- Lawton, R., Parker, D., Manstead, A. S. R., & Stradling, S. G. (1997). The role of affect in predicting social behaviours: The case of road traffic violations. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, **27**, 1258-1276.

- Maio, G. R., Olson, J. M., Allen, L., & Bernard, M. M. (2001). Addressing discrepancies between values and behavior: The motivating effect of reasons. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *37*, 104-117.
- Maio, G.R., Verplanken, B., Stroebe, W., Manstead, A.S.R., Abraham, C., Sheeran, P., & Conner, M. (2006). Social Psychological Knowledge of Lifestyle Change: Report for the Foresight Obesity Project. University of Cardiff: Unpublished.
- Malta, L.S., Blanchard, E.R., Friedenberg, B.M., Galovski, T.E., Karl, A., & Holzapfel, S.R. (2001). Psychophysiological reactivity of aggressive drivers: An exploratory study. *Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback*, *26*, 95-116.
- Manstead, A. S. R. (2000). The role of moral norm in the attitude-behavior relation. In D. J. Terry & M. A. Hogg (Eds), *Attitudes, Behavior, and Social Context* (pp. 11-30). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Parker et al 1996
- Parker, D., Manstead, A. S. R., & Stradling, S. G. (1995). Extending the theory of planned behaviour: The role of personal norm. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *34*, 127-137.
- Parker, D., Stradling, S.G., & Manstead, A. S. R. (1996). Modifying beliefs and attitudes to exceeding the speed limit: An intervention study based on the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *26*, 1-19.
- Reason, J.T., Manstead, A.S.R., Stradling, S.G., Baxter, J.S., & Campbell, K.A. (1990). Errors and violations on the road: A real distinction? *Ergonomics*, *33*, 1315-1332.
- Rutter, D., & Quine, L. (Eds.) (2001). *Changing health behaviours*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Smith, P., Waterman, M., & Ward, N. (2006). Driving aggression in forensic and non-forensic populations: Relationships to self-reported levels of aggression, anger and impulsivity. *British Journal of Psychology*, *97*, 387-403.
- Stradling, S. (2000). Drivers who speed. *Impact*, *9*, 38-41.
- Ward, N.J., Waterman, M.G., & Joint, M. (1998). Rage and violence in driver aggression. In G. Grayson (Ed.), *Behavioural research in road safety VIII*. Crowthorne: TRL.]

**THE MICROSOFT WEBSITE<sup>16</sup>**

- Always stay alert. Be prepared for silly mistakes and/or downright stupidity by other motorists. Yes, someone will enter a box junction and block your path despite the fact that their exit road is not clear. It will happen – deal with it and don't take it personally.
- Take a deep breath and stay calm. Never retaliate if the other driver has clearly lost his or her temper. Do not show them the finger, do not make any arm and fist gestures or swear at them as you drive by and under no circumstances should you leave your vehicle to confront someone.
- If the worst has happened and you're being followed by an angry motorist, do not drive to your work place or home and do not go to a friend's home or member of your family's home either. Instead, if you're able to safely do so, write down the make, model, colour of the car and registration number and call the police. If you're unable to make a phone call, head for a police station or a crowded public place before taking down the details. Hopefully the other person will have come to their senses long before then...
- Get into the habit of acknowledging considerate driving by other motorists. If they've given way to you, thank them. And if you're the one that's made a mistake, acknowledge this. Hopefully, your tactics will be adopted by other drivers around you and we'll all benefit in the long run.
- Use your horn sparingly as even a polite honk can be misinterpreted by an aggressive driver
- You might pride yourself on being reasonable, but there's no telling what the other driver is capable of. Never underestimate an angry person's capacity for violence. Be extremely cautious.
- Keep your distance. Do not tailgate. Not only is it dangerous and a common cause of accidents – it is intensely annoying.
- If it's a hot day and your car isn't air conditioned and you're sitting in static traffic, make sure you've got a cold drink to cool you down. Take steps to ensure the heat doesn't get to you in more ways than one...
- Try not to do anything that will irritate or antagonise other drivers. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- Listen to melodious, relaxing music in the car. Let it soothe you as you journey to your destination and hopefully, you'll enjoy a pleasanter, safer journey.

---

<sup>16</sup> [http://cars.uk.msn.com/news/car\\_news\\_article.aspx?cp-documentid=475134](http://cars.uk.msn.com/news/car_news_article.aspx?cp-documentid=475134)

THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION FOR  
TRAFFIC SAFETY<sup>17</sup>

(Some of the advice given below obviously relates to specific driving issues in the USA eg staying out of the far left lane, avoiding right hand lane if not turning right. But much of the general advice remains relevant to the UK)

- **Lane blocking.** Don't block the passing lane. Stay out of the far left lane and yield to the right for any vehicle that wants to overtake you. If someone demands to pass, allow them to do so.
- **Tailgating.** Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you. Dozens of deadly traffic altercations began when one driver tailgated another.
- **Signal use.** Don't switch lanes without first signalling your intention, and make sure you don't cut someone off when you move over. After you've made the manoeuvre, turn your signal off.
- **Gestures.** You are playing Russian roulette if you raise a middle finger to another driver. Obscene gestures have gotten people shot, stabbed, or beaten in every state.
- **Horn use.** Use your horn sparingly. If you must get someone's attention in a non-emergency situation, tap your horn lightly. Think twice before using your horn to say "hello" to a passing pedestrian; the driver in front of you may think you are honking at him. Don't blow your horn at the driver in front of you the second the light turns green. If a stressed-out motorist is on edge, the noise may set him off. Scores of shootings began with a driver honking the horn.
- **Failure to turn.** In most areas right-hand turns are allowed after a stop at a red light. Avoid the right-hand lane if you are not turning right.
- **Parking.** Do not take more than one parking space and do not park in a handicapped parking space if you are not handicapped. Don't allow your door to strike an adjacent parked vehicle. When parallel parking, do not tap the other vehicles with your own. Look before backing up.
- **Headlight use.** Keep headlights on low beam, except where unlighted conditions require the use of high beams. Dim your lights for oncoming traffic; don't retaliate to oncoming high beams with your own in order to "teach them a lesson." Don't approach a vehicle from the rear with high beams and dim your lights as soon as a passing vehicle is alongside.

---

<sup>17</sup> Advice taken from a paper "Aggressive Driving" by Louis Mizell, Bethesda, MD prepared for the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

<http://www.aaafoundation.org/resources/index.cfm?button=agdrtext>

- **Merging.** When traffic permits, move out of the right-hand acceleration lane of a freeway to allow vehicles to enter from the on-ramps.
- **Blocking traffic.** If you are pulling a trailer or driving a cumbersome vehicle that impedes traffic behind you, pull over when you have the opportunity so that motorists behind you can pass. Also, do not block the road while talking to a pedestrian on the sidewalk. Dozens of shooting suggest that this behaviour irritates a lot of people.
- **Car phones.** Don't let the car phone become a distraction - keep your eyes and attention on the road. Car phones can be great for security but bad for safety. In addition, car phone users are widely perceived as being poor drivers and as constituting a traffic hazard. The data clearly show that aggressive drivers hate fender-benders with motorists who were talking on the telephone.
- **Alarms.** If you have an anti-theft alarm on your vehicle, be sure you know how to turn it off. When buying an alarm, select one that turns off after a short period of time.
- **Displays.** Confederate flags on pickup trucks are not a good idea. Refrain from showing any type of bumper sticker or slogan that could be offensive; this might include an "IM RICH" license plate.
- **Eye Contact.** If a hostile motorist tries to pick a fight, do not make eye contact. This can be seen as a challenging gesture and incite the other driver to violence. Instead, get out of the way but do not acknowledge the other driver. If a motorist pursues you, do not go home. Instead, drive to a police station, convenience store, or other location where you can get help and there will be witnesses.

### **Reduce your own stress**

- Traffic stress - indeed, anger in general - is hazardous to your health. The stress from road congestion is a major contributing factor to violent traffic disputes. Making a few simple changes in the way you approach driving can significantly reduce your stress level in the car.
- Consider **altering your schedule** to avoid the worst congestion. Allow plenty of time so that you do not have to speed, beat traffic lights, or roll through stop signs. Think - is it really the end of the world if you are a bit late? Could you plan your day so you could leave a little earlier?
- Improve the **comfort of your vehicle**. Use your air conditioner, install a tape or CD player to enjoy uninterrupted music or books on tape, and get a pillow or seat cover to make your seat more comfortable. Listen to classical music or any music that reduces your anxiety; avoid anger-inducing talk radio, for example.
- While in traffic, **concentrate on being relaxed**. Don't clench your teeth. Loosen your grip on the wheel, take a deep breath, and do limited exercises and stretches for your arms and legs.
- **Don't drive** when you are angry, upset, or overtired.

**AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION<sup>18</sup>**

- If you're being hassled by another driver, try not to react. Avoid making eye contact, as this is often seen as confrontational. Don't be tempted to accelerate, brake, or swerve suddenly; again, this may be seen as confrontational and increases your chances of losing control of your vehicle.
- If a driver continues to hassle you or you think you are being followed, drive on to the nearest police station or busy place to get help.
- In town, lock the car doors and keep the windows and sunroof only partly open.
- When stopped in traffic, leave enough space to pull out from behind the car you are following.
- If someone tries to get into your car, attract attention by sounding your horn or a personal alarm.
- Do not be tempted to start a fight and do not be tempted to carry any sort of weapon. It may only provoke a potential assailant and could end up in his or her hands.
- Before starting a journey, make sure that you know how to get to your destination and, if possible, have an alternate route in mind or at least an atlas in the car. Think about the timing of the journey -- you wouldn't want to be travelling the M25 at 5:15 p.m. on a Friday.
- Make sure your car is regularly serviced and carry out routine checks (tyre pressure, oil, water, etc.) regularly. Carry spare items (bulbs, fan belt, emergency sign for the windshield, etc.). Also, make sure your windshield is clean, particularly before a long journey. Peering through a dirty windshield is a common source of stress and fatigue when driving. Also, have a window cloth, de-icer, and sunglasses accessible.
- Make sure that you are comfortable before starting the journey. Adjust your seat and mirrors. You should also ensure that your seat belt and head restraint are correctly positioned, if they are adjustable.
- Too often we have unreasonable expectations of journey times. Take journeys in easy stages and never remain behind the wheel of a car for more than three hours without a break. Don't try to cover more than 300 miles a day and, on a long trip, be careful on the second day of driving - this is when you tend to be most vulnerable to fatigue.

---

<sup>18</sup> Advice taken from a paper "Road Rage" by Matthew Joint, MSc, BSc, MCIT prepared for The Automobile Association Group Public Policy Road Safety Unit  
<http://www.aaafoundation.org/resources/index.cfm?button=agdrtext>

- When you take a break, make sure that you get out of the car and stretch your legs. Eat a light snack but avoid heavy meals, particularly at lunchtime. Try to avoid eating in noisy, crowded places.
- The likelihood of getting stressed while driving is largely dependent on your attitude of mind before you even turn the key in the ignition. Wind down before you crank up. Try to take one or two minutes to concentrate your mind on the task at hand and try to forget about other problems when driving.
- Anticipate situations that are likely to wind you up and be tolerant of other road users' errors. If you find yourself in congestion, try to accept that there is probably very little that you could have done or can do to prevent the delay.
- Take remedial action before stress and fatigue get the better of you. Learn to spot the warning signs and develop positive coping strategies, such as listening to the radio or a cassette (many people listen to novels or humorous tapes in jams).
- Wind down the windows to increase ventilation and consciously breathe in the air slowly. Also, don't grip the steering wheel too hard as this will tense arm and neck muscles, leading to fatigue symptoms such as headaches.
- If your mind is full of images of recent events or you are replaying conversations repeatedly in your mind, make a conscious effort to slow them down until they become softer and more distant.

**DIXON MOTORS<sup>19</sup>**

- Ensure the inside of your car is a pleasant environment eg clean, comfortable soothing music and nice smelling, with good company
- Drive at a leisurely rate
- Leave earlier than you normally would
- Map out your directions well in advance of getting in your car
- Be empathetic and polite towards other drivers
- Leave law enforcement to the police
- Being courteous is not a weakness; you can be flexible and remain in control eg intentionally let someone in ahead of you
- Don't rise to the bait - refuse to react to aggressive or drive riskily
- Don't let the car change your identity; it is your car that has the power
- Place stickers on your dashboard to remind you that road rage kills
- Think in new ways to help you see the bigger picture eg maybe he is lost
- Use supportive driving affirmations eg I will have a safe, relaxed and enjoyable drive. I am happy to allow another car into my lane. Driving carefully gets me there safely

**Do:**

- Ignore gestures and inconsiderate driving
- Watch for aggressive or risky drivers and keep your distance from them
- Be prepared to admit to an error and apologise using clear hand signals

**Don't:**

- Provoke other drivers by swearing, engaging eye contact or signals
- Roll down your window and yell or threaten
- Block the passing lane
- Flash your high beams
- Do anything that you would not do face-to-face
- Take it upon yourself to punish another driver

---

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.dixonmotors.co.uk/carcare/roadrage.asp>