

# News story: DVSA steps up safeguards to protect learner drivers

Jacqui Turland, the DVSA Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) Registrar, has confirmed that she will treat driving instructors having sexual relationships with 16 and 17-year-old pupils as exploitation, even if it's consensual.

If an instructor is considered a high risk to learners, they face being removed from the ADI register.

There are currently around 39,000 driving instructors in Great Britain and the majority of those offer a high standard of tuition and pride themselves on delivering excellent customer service.

It's important that learner drivers get a high-quality service from their instructor. Learners and their parents need to be confident that their instructor will:

- act in a professional manner at all times
- provide them with the skills they need to drive safely on modern roads

To ensure the safety of learner drivers, all driving instructors are subject to enhanced criminal record checks which must be renewed every 4 years.

## **Serious allegations of improper behaviour**

However, from April 2016 to March 2017 there were 109 investigations into instructor misconduct, which includes inappropriate sexual behaviour and other offences.

DVSA will investigate serious allegations of improper behaviour and refer its findings to the police. These allegations include instructors:

- using sexualised language
- using unnecessary physical contact
- making inappropriate contact with their pupils
- sending indecent messages or images to their pupils

Andy Rice, DVSA Head of Counter-Fraud and Investigations, said:

DVSA's priority is to help you through a lifetime of safe driving.

We take the safety of learner drivers extremely seriously and will thoroughly investigate any complaints about the conduct of instructors and will involve the police where necessary.

Any driving instructors threatening the safety of learner drivers and failing to meet the 'fit and proper' criteria will be removed from the ADI register.

# Unacceptable behaviour and contractual issues

DVSA is also reminding learner drivers that:

- it's illegal for driving instructors to use a hand-held phone while the learner is driving
- it's unacceptable for instructors to be impatient, shout or swear at them during their lessons

You should also report any contractual issues you have with your instructor to DVSA, such as:

- lessons that are shorter than agreed
- the instructor arriving late
- the instructor cancelling lessons
- failing to provide pre-paid lessons

DVSA will ask the instructor about the matter on your behalf. However, DVSA can't help you get any money back.

## Choosing a driving instructor

The best place to [find a fully-qualified driving instructor](#) that meets your needs is on GOV.UK

When you use this service, you can check if instructors agree to follow the voluntary [driving instructor code of practice](#). This sets out how they should behave in their personal conduct and business dealings.

All the driving instructors listed have passed enhanced criminal record checks and had their ability to teach assessed to a set standard.

Driving instructors choose whether or not to be listed on this service, so not all qualified instructors will be shown.