

[News story: Tens of thousands of drivers get increased fines for using mobiles at wheel](#)

More than 26,000 motorists have been caught using a handheld mobile phone while driving in the first year since harsher penalties came into force.

Among these are 500 novice drivers who have had their licences revoked for using their phone behind the wheel in their first 2 years of driving.

On 1 March 2017, the penalties for this offence doubled from £100 and 3 penalty points to £200 and 6 points.

To coincide with the first anniversary of the new penalties, THINK! is highlighting the chances of being caught in adverts, which will appear on radio, social media, on demand video and in shopping centres, as part of its ongoing campaign to raise awareness of the dangers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78Kpi01LRKM>

Road Safety Minister Jesse Norman said:

The penalties for holding and using a mobile phone while driving have proven to be a strong deterrent, and more and more people are aware of just how dangerous this is.

But some motorists are still not only putting their own lives at risk, but the lives of others.

Everyone has a role to play to encourage drivers to put their phone away and not use it while at the wheel.

A further 1,997 motorists were handed fines as part of a national crackdown by traffic officers between 22 and 28 January 2018, which was choreographed by the National Police Chiefs' Council. Of those caught, 74% were male.

National Lead for Roads Policing, Chief Constable Anthony Bangham said:

In the year since the new legislation was introduced, we have started to see changes in driver behaviour as the public begin to understand the impact that driving whilst using a mobile phone can have. However, there are still far too many people underestimating the risk that they take when using their mobile phone at the wheel.

We used intelligence to identify hotspots and repeat offences to stop over 3000 drivers in one week. 66.5% of which were committing

a mobile phone related offence.

It is not just about the penalty points or the fine, it is about putting safety first and keeping your eyes on the road so you don't risk hurting or killing an innocent person.

RAC road safety spokesman Pete Williams said:

Drivers tell us that their top motoring concern is seeing other people using a handheld mobile phone at the wheel. The introduction of tougher penalties sent a strong signal to offenders and we hope that this, combined with targeted enforcement of the law by police and impactful campaigns from the likes of THINK! and Be Phone Smart, is beginning to encourage a shift in driver behaviour.

Regardless of the efforts by government, the police and road safety campaigners, the decision to pick up a handheld phone – or leave it alone – while driving remains a personal choice that each driver makes. While the temptation may be strong, drivers need to really ask themselves what is so important that they must risk their life, and the lives of others, by using a handheld mobile phone at the wheel.

We encourage all drivers to think about the role their phone plays in the car while they should be focused on driving – and then make a personal promise to stay safe and legal by visiting BePhoneSmart.uk.

After last March's THINK! campaign, 9 in 10 people were aware of the new penalties. The adverts were seen by around 29 million people and social media content was seen by a further 12 million people.

[Last October's Pink Kitten video](#), which highlighted how much you miss if you glance at your phone while driving, reached an audience of about 21 million people.

[Press release: Downing Street hosts St David's Day reception to celebrate Wales' national day](#)

The Welsh flag will be flying proudly above Downing Street today when Prime Minister Theresa May welcomes guests from Welsh business, tourism, sport and media to a reception to celebrate St David's Day (1 March).

The very best in Welsh food and drink suppliers will showcase their products at the event including Welsh whisky from Penderyn, wine from Glyndwr Vinyard and Welsh produce from Cwm Farm Charcuterie.

There will also be performances from the London based Welsh choir Cor y Boro, and harpist Rhys Ward-Haugh.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Today's reception is all about celebrating everything that Wales has to offer to the world – and there is indeed much to celebrate.

We are a proud nation – and a special part of the United Kingdom. And we are home to some of the greatest talent and industry in the world.

We have Welsh entrepreneurs, inventors and creative people leaving an indelible mark all around the globe, each overseeing Wales' tremendous renaissance in sport, cuisine, arts and business.

I'm delighted to join the Prime Minister in welcoming Wales to Downing Street today, and extend my warmest wishes to everyone celebrating St David's Day around the world.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Images from the event will be available from the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales communications team post reception.
2. Suppliers at the St David's Day reception are:
 - Penderyn – Brecon
 - Ridiculously Rich – Aberaeron (Alana Spencer 'Apprentice' winner)
 - Tregroes Waffles – Teifi Valley
 - Jones o Gymru crisps – Conwy
 - Glyndwr Vineyard – Vale of Glamorgan
 - Cwm Farm Charcuterie – Neath Port Talbot
 - Greenacre Market Farm – Llanteg, Pembrokeshire

[Press release: New technology supports](#)

new mums to breastfeed

Almost three-quarters of women start breastfeeding when their child is born, however by 6 to 8 weeks this drops to just 44%. This makes breastfeeding rates in England among the lowest in the world.

A new survey of 1,000 mothers of young children commissioned by Public Health England (PHE) revealed that in hindsight, mothers wished they had been better prepared for breastfeeding. Before the birth of their first child, mums' biggest priorities were:

- buying baby equipment (66%)
- preparing for labour (49%)
- buying baby clothes (40%)

However, post birth, nearly a quarter (24%) wished they had read about and were more prepared for breastfeeding and 1 in 4 (26%) of those who had given breast milk to their first child wished they had known that asking for help can make a real difference.

Evidence shows the right support helps mothers to breastfeed for longer. PHE's programme Start4Life has created the Breastfeeding Friend to encourage parents to adopt healthy behaviours. It is available for free on a range of platforms, including Facebook Messenger, and now for the first time it will also be available as a skill for Amazon Alexa's voice service.

Mothers can ask Alexa a variety of questions about breastfeeding and the answers will be provided tailored to the age of the baby. This means that they can get helpful advice even when their hands are full.

The survey also highlighted that almost a third (31%) of mothers also felt embarrassed about asking for help with breastfeeding from healthcare professionals. Many mothers can find breastfeeding challenging and often this may cause them to give up.

It also found that almost two thirds (64%) felt that access to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week breastfeeding support, such as a phonenumber, website or chatbot, would make new mothers:

- more likely to have a positive experience of breastfeeding
- more likely to decide to try breastfeeding (59%)
- breastfeed for longer (58%)

PHE recommends exclusive breastfeeding for around the first 6 months. Breastfeeding boosts a baby's ability to fight illness and infection, and babies who are not breastfed are more likely to get diarrhoea and chest infections. Breastfeeding also lowers a mother's risk of breast cancer and may reduce the risk of ovarian cancer.

Viv Bennett, Chief Nurse at Public Health England said:

Breastfeeding, whilst natural, is something that mothers and babies learn together, and whilst learning, women may have questions and setbacks. PHE is working with health professionals to make sure women are not embarrassed and receive timely help. Health professionals do an excellent job of caring for new mothers, but they cannot be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, which is where our Breastfeeding Friend from Start4Life is designed to help. This tool, together with the range of support materials from Start4Life, can provide breastfeeding advice at any time of night or day and support mothers and their partners and families through challenges they may face.

These digital offerings will help guide new parents through their first weeks of breastfeeding and beyond, providing help at any time of the day or night, and aim to complement support and advice from health care professionals and breastfeeding specialists. The information provided by all the Start4Life services is NHS approved and both services are independent of Amazon and Facebook.

Dr Cheryll Adams CBE, Executive Director Institute of Health Visiting, says:

This innovative new service will enhance those already provided by health professionals. Whether a mother manages to establish breastfeeding is largely determinant on the support she receives in the first few days after birth. However, with such short hospital stays, professional support is not as widely available as it once was. To have this back up, which can be accessed from anywhere, will be hugely helpful and we expect health visitors to want to promote the service.

Justine Roberts, CEO and Founder of Mumsnet, says:

Breastfeeding is a hard-won skill for many women, and most mothers will experience a setback along the way, particularly in the first few weeks. We see from conversations on Mumsnet that mothers are looking for breastfeeding support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and in fact middle of the night crises when face-to-face help isn't available can be the most profoundly lonely and difficult. These new round-the-clock digital services could provide help when mothers need it most.

More information, advice and tips on breastfeeding is available on the [Start4Life website](#).

1 – Once Breastfeeding Friend from Start4Life is enabled from the Alexa app, users can activate the skill on their Alexa by using the wake word 'Alexa' and asking for the 'Breastfeeding Friend'. A 'card' will be sent to the user's Alexa app showing some of the most common questions the Breastfeeding

Friend can answer. Users can access quick tips or advice, and ask Alexa a variety of questions about breastfeeding. The answers will be provided tailored to the age of the baby. The 24 hours a day, 7 days a week Breastfeeding Friend from Start4Life aims to make it simple and easy for breastfeeding mums to ask for help if they are facing any breastfeeding difficulties.

2 – In addition to the Breastfeeding Friend from Start4Life there are many other ways that mothers can get breastfeeding support. The [Start4Life website](#) has a range of advice and resources which can help mothers continue breastfeeding. Mothers can also call a national helpline (0300 100 0212) provided by the Breastfeeding Network 365 days a year. Mothers can also get help through:

- friends and family
- their Midwifery team
- their health visitor
- local breastfeeding drop-in services

3 – The survey was conducted by Kantar Public from 26 January to 7 February 2018 with a nationally representative sample of 1005 mothers in England with children under the age of 4, on behalf of PHE. The data were weighted to population statistics based on age of mum, region and socio-economic group. Findings show:

- of those who ever gave breastmilk to their first child, younger mums were more likely than older mums to use online sources (42% of 18 to 34 years compared to 30% of 35 to 50 years) when researching or starting to breastfeed
- of mums who breastfed their first child, a quarter wished they'd known it can take a long time, but it's quality time to spend with their baby (25%) and there is lots of help and support available from breastfeeding groups, other parents and online (24%)
- 1 in 4 (26%) mums felt using more online/digital tools and information would have helped them to be more prepared for becoming a mum
- in hindsight, mums wished their main priorities before the birth of their first child had been preparing for labour (33%), spending time with friends and family (26%), reading about and preparing for breastfeeding (24%) and preparing for night feeds (22%)

4 – Sometimes breastfeeding isn't possible for a range of reasons. If this is the case, in terms of liquids babies should only be given infant formula milk for the first 12 months and no other types of milk.

5 – Start4Life's Information Service for Parents and [Start4Life website](#) offers NHS information and advice for parents-to-be and parents of 0 to 5 year olds providing them with the advice they need to help get their child off to the best start in life.

6 – The Department of Health is also supporting Unicef UK to develop a neonatal infant feeding network to support sick and preterm babies.

7 – PHE exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services.

[Press release: St David's Day 2018: A message from the Secretary of State for Wales](#)

At home in Wales and in nations all over the world, people with Welsh heritage – and people who are Welsh at heart – are today celebrating St David's Day and all that is great about our country.

Children will be travelling to school dressed in national costume; Eisteddfod audiences will be regaled with Welsh poetry, and hundreds of people, heads bobbing under the weight of bright yellow daffodil hats, will be taking part in colourful St David's Day parades up and down the country.

I've always been aware of the power of what it means to be Welsh.

I've long been fascinated by centuries-old literature at the National Library and been proud to bring the Welsh language to Westminster debates in my time as Secretary of State for Wales.

I've been entertained by the Welsh National Opera and marvelled at the exploits of our sports stars around the world.

I've been moved by heroic tales of the Welshmen that fought for our freedom at First World War centenary commemorations.

And I've been transported back to my childhood by our museums and Eisteddfods.

These have all been experiences that have made me proud to be a Welshman, and proud of all that we contribute to the world.

For centuries, Wales' greatest asset and greatest export has been its people.

We are international in our outlook and have taken our flair, inventiveness and determination to succeed to the four corners of the globe.

Wales has helped bring peace and security to nations, made some of the world's greatest inventions, and been at the forefront of international trade in every continent.

Because this is a country whose achievements in industry, in technology,

sport, music, literature and the arts – they far outweigh our size.

I have also been playing my part by getting on the road to open doors for Wales. From my trade missions to Japan, the USA and the Middle East – they all demonstrate that this Prime Minister and her UK Government is fully behind Wales and I am sending a message to the world that Wales is one of the best places to live, work, visit and trade with.

And our reputation as Europe's best kept secret will soon be no more as so many more people will come to see for themselves just how much Wales has to offer when the tolls to cross the Severn Bridges are abolished later this year, and flights from Cardiff to Qatar take to the skies in May.

Because in this period of momentous change, we must shout louder than ever before about Wales – I will always champion the Welsh entrepreneurs, inventors and creative people that are leaving an indelible mark around the world. About the business and investment opportunities we have here, about our calibre as a first class sporting and cultural destination.

And today, we celebrate that success by flying the Welsh flag high over N10 Downing Street at the UK Government's St David's Day reception – just as it will be flying over our public buildings, churches and schools all across Wales.

So let's prove that we can be proud of our individual nations and also be committed to our precious union of nations. Because no matter how great we are alone, we will always be greater together.

Once again, to everyone across Wales and around the world, I'd like to wish you a very happy St David's Day. Dydd Gwyl Dewi hapus I bawb.

Speech: Reiterating the call for a 30-day ceasefire, without delay, in Syria

Thank you Mr President.

And thank you also to Under-Secretary Generals Lowcock and Feltman for their clear and factual briefings and for reiterating to all of us on this Council the ongoing horror of the conflict in Syria, and in particular in Eastern Ghouta, because that is where it is clear the situation is most dire by a huge order of magnitude.

It was five days ago that we sat in this Council and all of us raised our hands in support of a 30-day ceasefire, which we hoped would provide some relief to Syria's people. This was a desperately needed step. A step that came too late for many. In Eastern Ghouta alone, Médecins Sans Frontières

reported that at least 630 people were killed and 3,000 injured in the week before Resolution 2401 was agreed, with women and children representing nearly 60 percent of the wounded and 50 percent of the deceased. We continue, as well, to condemn attacks on Damascus from Eastern Ghouta.

Let us recall the demands of our resolution. It called for at least a 30-day ceasefire, without delay, to allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid and medical evacuation.

Without delay means right now. Immediately. That there should be no delay. We all voted for these demands and we committed to use our influence to ensure this.

In response, Russia has declared a five-hour daily humanitarian window. That is not what this Council demanded, nor what Russia agreed to use its influence to ensure. A five-hour window has not delivered and cannot deliver any meaningful improvement on the ground. Under-Secretary General Lowcock has made clear that the United Nations cannot get humanitarian convoys in and out within that timeframe, as has the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Humanitarian pauses of a few meagre hours are no substitute for a sustained ceasefire, which is vital to ensure delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance and medical evacuations. If Russia is able to deliver a five-hour pause, let it deliver a 24 hour one, as they agreed on Saturday.

Mr President,

Let us now take stock of the situation in Syria, and specifically in Eastern Ghouta where the situation is at its most desperate, and review if any real change has occurred in the past five days. Has the resolution been implemented? Has there been a ceasefire? Any delivery of humanitarian aid? Or any medical evacuations? Has the passing of this resolution bought any relief to the people of Syria?

The fighting has not stopped. All of the main armed opposition groups have committed to the full implementation of Resolution 2401. The Assad regime has not, and has in fact ignored the resolution we passed. Reports of attacks and airstrikes by pro-regime forces continue. 22 airstrikes reportedly took place even during Russia's so-called humanitarian pause.

And, as if it could not get any worse, there have been disturbing reports of use of chlorine gas. Doctors in Eastern Ghouta reported to the Syrian American Medical Society that 16 patients, including six children, were suffering from symptoms indicative to exposure to chemical compounds following an alleged regime attack on Sunday, only one day after the resolution was passed.

Since Saturday, not a single aid convoy has been able to access Eastern Ghouta to provide relief to the desperate civilians.

The World Health Organisation estimates that one thousand people are now in need of medical evacuation from Eastern Ghouta. None have been evacuated since the resolution was passed.

The consequences of the failure to implement the resolution are clear. The casualties continue to rise. The horror continues. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights report at least 14 civilians, including three children, were killed on Sunday.

In short, in the words of one doctor from Eastern Ghouta, "nothing has changed."

Mr President,

It is the responsibility of us all to ensure that Resolution 2401 is enacted in full.

In the words of my Foreign Secretary, "The Assad regime must allow the UN to deliver humanitarian aid, in compliance with Resolution 2401, and we look to Russia and Iran to make sure this happens, in accordance with their own promises."

I implore all those with influence over the Syrian regime to act now to ensure that the ceasefire, which they supported in this chamber, is implemented in full and immediately.

To do anything less is an affront to this Council, this United Nations and the international system that we live by.

We will continue to monitor implementation of Resolution 2401 and commit to returning to this Council regularly until we see it respected.

Thank you Mr President.