

**A PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE  
STAFFORDSHIRE YOUNG DRIVER COACHING  
PROGRAMME RESOURCE PACK**



**Helen Wells, Lindsey Simkins  
University of Keele, and RoSPA**

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## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 Executive Summary</b> .....	2
<b>2 Abstract</b> .....	5
<b>3 Introduction</b> .....	6
3.1 Young Driver Casualty Rates.....	6
3.2 The Young Driver Coaching Programme (YDCP).....	6
3.3 The YDCP Resource Pack.....	6
<b>4 Methodology</b> .....	8
4.1 Process Evaluation.....	8
4.2 YDCP Logic Model.....	8
4.3 Key Research Questions.....	8
4.4 Research Methods.....	8
<b>5 Results</b> .....	11
5.1 Scope of Results.....	11
5.2 Programme Components.....	11
5.3 Implementation Objectives.....	12
5.4 Socio-psychological barriers to participation.....	18
5.5 Motives for joining the YDCP Resource Pack.....	22
5.6 How best to recruit learners and parents.....	24
5.7 Programme Components.....	28
5.8 Linking Constructs.....	32
5.9 Short-Term Outcomes.....	34
5.10 Long-Term Outcomes.....	35
<b>6 Results: Content and Layout of the Resource Pack Materials</b> .....	36
<b>7 Unintended Consequences</b> .....	38
7.1 Perceived Threat to ADI Business.....	38
<b>8 Discussion</b> .....	40
8.1 Acceptability.....	40
8.2 Parent-ADI-Learner Communication.....	40
8.3 Lesson Sit-ins.....	40
8.4 The Need for an Introductory Leaflet.....	40
8.5 Scheme Intensity.....	41
8.6 Structuring Private Practice.....	41
8.7 Maintaining Learner Buy-In.....	41
8.8 Basing Publicity on Learner and Parent Motivations.....	41
8.9 Future Monitoring and Evaluation Concerns.....	42
<b>9 Summary</b> .....	43
<b>10 Recommendations</b> .....	45

<b>11 Appendix 1: Supporting Literature</b> .....	46
11.1 Underlying Principles.....	46
11.2 Current UK Learner Training and Testing Developments.....	46
11.3 The Importance of Parents.....	46
11.4 The Importance of Private Practice.....	47
11.5 The Importance of Partnership.....	48
<b>12 References</b> .....	50

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Young Driver Coaching Programme Resource Pack (YDCP) was devised by Staffordshire County Council's Road Safety Unit and launched in August 2009. It consisted of a learner driver's record book and a supervising driver's information guide.
- The underlying principles of the YDCP are to increase the effectiveness of private practice in conjunction with professional instruction, and to involve parents in the learning to drive process. These principles are supported by findings from international research on road safety, learning to drive, and adolescent development.
- An evaluation of the early months of the project was commissioned by Staffordshire County Council's Road Safety Unit and carried out by a team from RoSPA and Keele University. It sought to answer four questions:
  - To what extent does the Resource Pack encourage supervisors to take an active role in the supervision of a learning driver and what were the perceived reasons for this?
  - How did members of the learning team view the introduction of the Resource Pack into the various relationships which formed part of the teaching and learning experience?
  - How successfully were the support opportunities offered by Staffordshire County Council utilised by parents, young drivers, and ADIs?
  - How appropriate were the content, style and requirements of the Resource Pack perceived for achieving its stated aims?
- The evaluation used both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative methods (focus groups and interviews).
- In the first four 'live' months of the project since ADIs received the YDCP resource, seventeen families signed up to the Resource Pack. Of the seventeen learners, nine were female and eight were male. The seventeen learners were distributed between 12 ADIs with four ADIs having more than one learner using the Pack. In total, 85 ADIs (24%) signed up to the scheme, out of a total of 350 ADIs initially contacted by Staffordshire County Council.
- Only one-quarter of potential ADIs participated in the scheme, thus not all learners received the same opportunity to take part. Some ADIs did not respond to approaches, others considered themselves too busy, for example.
- Recruitment was also affected by the non-eligibility of learners. Some lacked a supervising driver, while others lacked a suitable car to privately practice in. ADIs were reluctant to use the resource with existing learners, while they also reported an overall drop in the numbers of learners coming to them for lessons.
- Parents were crucial to the recruitment process. Without their enthusiasm, recruitment was not successful. However, many parents were not interested in being responsible for teaching their learner to drive, or were interested in supervising but not in committing to the YDCP Resource Pack. Some parents reported that the overall size and apparent demands of involvement were a deterrent, but that, once involved, the scheme was considered manageable.

- Despite a wide range of promotional activities, advertising either did not reach many of its intended participants or was largely unsuccessful in its aim to recruit. Instead, ADIs emerged as a crucial conduit of information about the scheme. Successful recruitment did, in most cases, depend on a direct approach from an ADI to a parent. This was not the recruitment process envisaged prior to the launch of the Programme.
- Attempts to generate a database of participating families proved unsuccessful. Not all ADI's passed on details of interested learners and so there was no accurate quantitative record of initial interest, meaning that drop-out rates could not be determined.
- Simplified publicity material of a type that could be handed to learners as an introduction to the scheme was felt to be a necessary development by many participants. A leaflet was recommended as a way of helping explain the Resource Pack – offering parents information without requiring them to engage with the whole resource in order to make a decision about involvement
- Although initial expectations amongst ADI's were that sit-ins (where the parent sits in the back during a lesson) would prove unpopular, they in fact turned out to be an important factor in recruitment of families and in use of the Resource Packs. For those who took the opportunity, the lesson sit-in offered a direct opportunity for parents and ADI's to communicate with each other and was highly valued.
- There was little consistency amongst learning teams about how the Resource Pack materials were used. Use of the materials by instructors was varied and this idiosyncratic pattern of use was also found amongst the learners and parents. ADI's reported that learners' use of the drivers' record book ranged from keeping the book on the shelf to keeping the book with them for lessons and practice.
- Parents engaged with the Resource Pack materials in flexible ways, principally by using the supervising driver's information guide as a reference book; – as something to refer to when questions or conflict arose. ADI's, learners and parents were universal in their entirely positive accounts of how the Resource Pack helped to avoid or solve conflict
- The Resource Pack further helped to more effectively structure private practice sessions as the driver's record book gave parents a greater idea of their learners' progress.
- The Resource Pack materials were thought by all to be thorough, yet clearly written and easy to use. The information guide and record book were considered “professional” and “well put together”. There were only minor suggestions for how the materials could be improved. These suggestions related to the layout and an over-reliance on text.
- Many parents commented that their own driving knowledge had improved. Through using the Resource Pack parents had to learn and accept that their own knowledge and beliefs about driving might not be quite as satisfactory as they once thought.
- The programme designers did not intend for private supervision to replace formal professional learning. However from the outset of the Resource Pack though there were concerns aired by ADI's that in promoting the resource they would be losing paid business. ADI's feared that by increasing the amount of private supervision,

learners would opt to reduce the number of paid professional lessons they take. The fear was that the Resource Pack would be used as a substitute instructor.

- The YDCP Resource Pack was a widely accepted intervention with ADI's, learners, and parents, understanding, and appreciating, the aims of the scheme. This acceptability was enhanced by the enthusiasm and commitment of the programme designers and developers.

## 2. ABSTRACT

*We were coming up to some temporary traffic lights, nice straight bit of road you could see half a mile up the road, nothing coming towards us. The lights were red so I thought, 'he's going to slow down in a minute, I'm sure he'll slow down; he's going to have to slow down pretty quickly'. I hit the brakes and I said, 'Didn't you see the lights?' 'Yes'. 'But they're red, weren't you going to stop?' 'No'. 'Well why no?' 'There's nothing coming, my Dad says if it's a temporary traffic light and you can see it's clear you don't need to stop.'*  
(Approved Driving Instructor)

Staffordshire County Council's Road Safety Unit became aware of tales like the above from the County's driving instructors. Inspired by the DSA's 'Learning to Drive' public consultation, the Road Safety Unit worked together with independent driving instructors to devise a resource aimed at supporting *beneficial* private practice. The Young Driver Coaching Programme Resource Pack consisted of a learner driver's record book and a supervising driver's information guide. The Resource Pack intended to improve the learning relationships between learner, parent and ADI, and to encourage the active involvement of parents in their child's learning.

An evaluation of the early months of the project was commissioned by Staffordshire County Council's Road Safety Unit and carried out by a team from RoSPA and Keele University, funded by BNFL. This process evaluation reports on the success of the Resource Pack in improving the quality of private practice, for instance by resolving conflicts between the three members of the learning team and in updating parents' knowledge of teaching methods and road rules.

This report highlights the challenge of gaining (and sustaining) active parental involvement and describes the challenge of structuring conventionally unstructured private practice.



### **3. INTRODUCTION**

#### **3.1 Young Driver Casualty Rates**

The over-representation of young drivers in casualty statistics is cited at the start of many reports but it is a fact worth repeating. In the county of Staffordshire, Central England, young people aged 17-24 years constitute 29% of all drivers killed or injured in road crashes. Of all fatal driver casualties, 17-24 year olds comprised 28%<sup>12</sup>.

ONS population statistics<sup>3</sup> estimate that for the three years 2005-2007, 17-24 year olds comprised just 10% of Staffordshire's population. 17-24 year old drivers' crash involvement was, therefore, three times their rate in the County's population.

Staffordshire County Council's road safety unit are working to reduce the numbers of young drivers involved in road traffic incidents by delivering programmes aimed at the three stages of a young person's driving career: pre-driver; learner; and post-test. Pre-driver projects include year 11 (age 15-16 years) resources delivered in schools on crash investigation, and the consequences of driving under the influence of drink or drugs. The authority is also piloting the DSA's Safe Road User Award. For learner drivers Staffordshire C. C. offers presentations to schools for year 11's on applying for a provisional licence, insurance, and choosing a driving instructor. Post-test resources include an interactive workshop for years 12 and 13 (age 16-18 years) on hazard perception, and Pass Plus Extra (classroom based and on-road driver training, including motorway driving).

#### **3.2 The Young Driver Coaching Programme (YDCP)**

The Young Driver Coaching Programme (YDCP) was developed by Staffordshire County Council's road safety unit in order to provide young drivers with additional support in the learner and post-test stages. The YDCP was launched officially in August 2009 but was earlier publicised to interested parties in May of that year.

The YDCP consists of two independent projects: the GreenRoad Safety Centre and the YDCP Resource Pack. The Safety Centre involves fitting a small 'black box' into a young driver's car once they have passed their test and are driving solo. The technology sends real-time feedback to the young driver and submits reports for parents to view on-line. The Safety Centre was first trialled by Staffordshire C. C. in 2008 but was partnered with the Resource Pack in 2009 to form the Young Drivers Coaching Programme. The two projects run independently but along the same principles of involving parents to support new young drivers in staying safe on the road.

#### **3.3 The YDCP Resource Pack**

The Resource Pack, as its name suggests, is made up of two key printed materials: the supervising driver's information guide and the driver's record book. The materials are primarily designed for use by learners and their supervising drivers in preparation for the practical part of the learner test.

Although the supervising driver's information guide is to be used in conjunction with the Approved Driving Instructor the term, 'supervising driver', refers to the non-professional: a parent, partner, or friend, for example who supervises a learner during private practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Staffordshire Police STATS 19 provided by Staffordshire County Council.

<sup>2</sup> Figures relate to young driver crashes occurring in Staffordshire but not all of the drivers involved were Staffordshire residents. Some of the drivers were from neighbouring counties or further afield.

<sup>3</sup> Mid Year Population Estimates, ONS, London

Throughout this report the term „supervisor’ is used interchangeably with „parent’ as parents are the most likely supervisors for this age group.

### *Aims*

The aim of the Resource Pack was to improve the effectiveness of private practice by providing supervisors with information about what, how, and why, their learners are being taught by the professional instructor. It was hoped that by aligning advice given in supervision with that given in professional instruction, fewer conflicts would occur between parent, learner and instructor. This would create a more relaxed learning environment and improve relationships between the „learning team’ (ADI: Learner: Parent). The hypothesis was that with effective well-structured private practice complementing professional instruction, the learner driver will be better prepared for solo driving.

The Resource Pack further aimed to encourage learner drivers to continue their learning even after they have passed their test, and also to encourage supervising drivers to maintain some involvement.

The ultimate aim was for fewer 17-24 year olds being involved in road traffic incidents in Staffordshire.

### *The Materials*

#### I) The supervising driver’s information guide

The supervising driver’s guide is an 8x8 inch 85 page spiral bound book produced in card, so as to be more durable than paper. The front of the book contains a glossary of terms and general advice to supervisors on preparing for driving practice. The remainder of the book is divided into short colour-coded sections on specific skills ranging from moving off, to hazards, and eco driving techniques. Each section begins with a table headed, ‘*Guidance on how to support the driver training programme being conducted by an instructing ADI*’. The guidance is arranged into: where to practice the skill, the objective of the practice, how to structure the practice, specific instructions, risks to be aware of, and references to supporting information. In addition to the tabulated guidance, the sections include „Questions and Answers’, suggesting questions for supervisors to use during practice sessions. The information guide is in accordance with the British Driving Standards Agency’s official recommended syllabus.

#### II) The driver’s record book

The driver’s record book is 6x6 inch 50 page book, also produced in card, and is intended to be taken by the learner to their professional lessons. The record book again includes a glossary of terms at the front and explains to the user the benefits of private practice, as well as how to use the book. The book is broken down into ten key skills which the instructor dates and signs when in their opinion the learner is ready to cover that skill in private practice sessions. Room is allowed on each page for both instructors and supervisors to record comments, as well as an area for supervising drivers to record how well their learner has completed those skills in practice. At the end of the book is a record table for learners to log the private practice they have received and the different road and weather conditions experienced. The final pages include information on different formal learning routes that can be followed once fully licensed.

Whilst the driver’s record book was to be retained by the learner, the supervising driver’s information guide was loaned to parents: returnable upon the learner passing their test.

### *Pilot Period*

The YDCP Resource Pack was launched in the press and „went live’ on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2009. The evaluation team followed development of the project from May 2009 and reports on data from the first four months of the pilot (August – December).

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Process Evaluation**

An evaluation steering group was formed and met monthly at Staffordshire County Council offices, from May through December 2009. Staffordshire County Council's lead and main contact for the Resource Pack project was Road Safety Officer Irene Williamson.

### **4.2 YDCP Logic Model**

Figure 1 shows the logic model for the YDCP Resource Pack. The logic model was composed by the evaluation team in discussions with Staffordshire County Council about their assumptions underlying how the project was expected to achieve its goals. The logic model was agreed by the steering group in the initial phase of the evaluation, in order to be clear about the project aims and expectations and to be able to monitor progress. This 'project theory' enabled study of individual project components; allowing identification of the success of the assumed mechanisms.

As a process evaluation of a pilot project, the study concentrated on the implementation processes and on whether or not the intended outputs were achieved (A, B, and C in Fig. 1). Early results from first users of the Resource Pack also permitted examination of the project logic's 'linking constructs' (D). Linking constructs are the links between cause and effect (McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006), the steps which must occur in-between the outputs and the desired outcomes.

Due to the time-scale of the evaluation, long-term outcomes (E2) could not be reported as the average learner receives 67 hours of driving practice (formal plus informal) before passing their test (Wells et al, 2008). The findings, however, can inform future outcome evaluation studies of the Resource Pack.

### **4.3 Key Research Questions**

The process evaluation set out to answer four key questions on the technical content and use of the pack, and its impact on the relationships between learner driver, supervising driver, and ADI. The four questions were:

- To what extent does the Resource Pack encourage supervisors to take an active role in the supervision of a learning driver and what were the perceived reasons for this?
- How did members of the learning team view the introduction of the Resource Pack into the various relationships which formed part of the teaching and learning experience?
- How successfully were the support opportunities offered by Staffordshire County Council utilised by parents, young drivers, and ADIs?
- How appropriate were the content, style and requirements of the Resource Pack perceived for achieving its stated aims?

### **4.4 Research Methods**

The methodology employed both quantitative and qualitative methods by way of questionnaires and focus groups.

#### **Quantitative**

Participants were asked to complete two structured pre-post designed questionnaires: sweep 1 and sweep 2. Each member of the learning team (learner, supervisor, ADI) was given their own version of the same basic questions and the questionnaires were coded so that responses could be analysed as part of a three-way relationship. Sweep 1 was at the stage before learners began using the Resource Pack and aimed to measure motives for

joining the scheme as well as expectations of benefit. Sweep 2 was to be completed ten weeks after use of the Resource Pack began and included additional questions on experience of using the pack, the effect on supervised practice, and general comments on the „best’ and „worst’ features.

Within each sweep there were two questionnaires for each „type’ of learning team. It was recognised in the evaluation design stage that more than one „type’ of learner might be signing-up to the scheme: brand new learners just starting practical driver training; and learners who already have some practical driving experience from either an ADI or supervising driver, or both. As previous experience of being supervised, or of being a supervisor, could affect the impact of any new intervention, it was necessary to document this potential difference between the pilot participants. There would also be no „pre-’ condition for new learner teams so questions on existing learner relationships were omitted. There were therefore two questionnaire sets: one for the learner who started learning *without* the Resource Pack, and one for the learner who started *with* it.

### **Qualitative**

To gain in-depth qualitative feedback, four focus groups were convened: two with ADI’s, one with parents, and one with learners. Short telephone interviews were also conducted with all ADI’s on the YDCP Resource Pack database.

Focus groups were recorded (audio), transcribed, and analysed by the researchers using content analysis. Telephone conversations were not recorded but comments were written up and maintained in a database.

Evaluators were also present at the initial YDCP ADI open evening and at later ADI training evenings. Feedback from the ADI open evening was gathered from a paper survey returned on the night.

<b>Fig. 1</b> A Programme Components	B Implementation Objectives	C Programme Outputs	D Linking Constructs	E1 Short-term Outcomes	E2 Long-term Outcomes
<p>1. Resource Pack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervising driver (SD) Information Guide</li> <li>• Driver Record Book</li> </ul> <p>2. Optional driving assessments for parents by Council fleet trainers</p> <p>3. SD „sits-in‘ on at least three ADI-learner lessons before using Pack. Optional but to be encouraged</p> <p>4. Telephone support number for all parties</p> <p>5. Training evenings for ADI’s prior to sign-up</p> <p>6. Direct marketing campaign to all Council employees</p> <p>7. Media launch in local press</p>	<p>1. ADI’s to pass on details of potential YDCP learners to Staffs. CC for enrolment (local recruitment)</p> <p>2. Staffs. CC to be contacted directly by learners via marketing campaign (central recruitment)</p> <p>3. All signed-up ADI’s to have received Resource Packs and distributed accordingly</p> <p>4. All existing and new 17-24 year old learner drivers taking lessons from a YDCP ADI, to be using Resource Packs</p> <p>5. Continued recruitment and training of ADI’s post YDCP launch</p> <p>6. All SD’s to have been assessed and/or sat-in on their learners’ lessons with the ADI</p> <p>7. ADI’s adhere to Code of Conduct</p>	<p>1. SD’s actively using Information Guide and Record Book, as monitored by individual ADI’s and quality assurance processes</p> <p>2. Equal number of Resource Packs ‚loaned out‘ to learners and SD’s as those signed up to the YDCP</p> <p>3. Database of learner’s stage of participation in the YDCP</p>	<p>1. Harmonious relationship between the three members of the learning teams ↓</p> <p>2. More efficient formal instruction ↓</p> <p>3. Increased amount of beneficial private practice undertaken ↓</p> <p>4. More effective structure of learning ↓</p> <p>5. Increased amount of on-road driving experience and exposure ↓</p> <p>6. ADI under less pressure has more time to address attitudinal issues ↓</p> <p>7. Increased confidence of the learning team in progression made by learner driver ↓</p> <p>8. Learner driver better prepared at point of test and more likely to be test ‚ready‘ on first attempt ↓</p> <p>9. Learner driver has greater understanding of, and more compliant attitude towards, rules of the road ↓</p> <p>10. Learner driver better prepared for solo driving and has positive attitude towards continuous driver development</p>	<p>1. YDCP drivers take up post-test initiatives, for example Pass Plus or Green Roads/Admiral Insurance Safety Centre</p> <p>2. Continued positive relationship with supervising driver re: driver development</p> <p>3. Novice drivers have good attitude towards and appreciation of, the importance of road rules and limits.</p> <p><i>(Intermediate Outcomes: Greater ability to handle peer pressure when driving with same-age passengers)</i></p>	<p>1. Reduced incident and accident rate of 17-24 year old (young) drivers in Staffordshire</p> <p>2. Reduced KSI statistics for young drivers in Staffordshire</p> <p>3. Reduced involvement of young drivers in Staffordshire Speed Awareness Courses</p> <p>4. Reduced involvement of young drivers in Staffordshire Driver Improvement Schemes</p> <p>5. Reduced insurance claims made by young drivers</p>

## 5. RESULTS

In the first four 'live' months of the project since ADI's received the YDCP resource, seventeen families signed up to the Resource Pack. Of the seventeen learners, nine were female and eight were male.

The seventeen learners were distributed between 12 ADI's with four ADI's having more than one learner using the Pack. In total, 85 ADI's out of the 350 ADI's invited (24%), contacted Staffordshire County Council and subsequently signed up to the scheme.

### 5.1 Scope of results

The process evaluation was designed to study how the Resource Pack was used by learning team participants, as well as the effect that such use had on the learning relationships.

The research has revealed useful insights into how the Resource Pack was engaged with by its intended recipients and found positive impacts on the learning team relationships.

Although the long-term impact on driving safety was beyond the remit of this study these impacts could be studied in a future outcome evaluation.

The results are described in order of the components of the YDCP Resource Pack project logic model (Fig. 1). Although no long-term outcomes were measured the results conclude with reference to short-term outcomes. As a result of the low numbers of learners able to complete the questionnaires within the time-scale of the evaluation, quantitative responses were too low in number to reliably report upon. Presented results are therefore primarily qualitative.

Objectives that were not achieved, as well as further emergent issues requiring explanation, are included in italics following the relevant heading from the logic model.

Quotes from the participants have been anonymised and all names used are pseudonyms.

### 5.2 Programme Components (A)

**Objective A1:** 200 copies of the Resource Pack were printed and distributed (200 supervising driver's information guides and 200 driver's record books).

**Objective A2:** Optional driving assessments for parents were the only component not completed during the evaluation period. Whilst the assessments were always a desired part of the programme they were never operationalised due to a lack of demand from parents. This could reflect a total lack of demand from parents or a total lack of advertised supply from ADI's. Providers of the assessments were to be County Council fleet trainers. Therefore, ADI's may not have wanted to advertise business for other driver trainers (assessments needed to be paid for). As ADI's were negative about parents' willingness to even sit-in on their learners' lessons they also might not have promoted the assessments out of a genuine belief that parents would not be interested.

**Objective A3:** Supervising driver sits-in on at least three ADI-learner lessons. The optional sit-in was utilised by some but not all of the parents who signed up to the YDCP ADI. The majority of these parents had, at the time of interview, sat-in one of their learner's lessons. The sit-ins are discussed further in section B6.

**Objective A4:** The telephone support number for all parties was widely known about and was successful in answering all queries about the Resource Pack. The telephone contact offered front-line support to parents and ADI's although learners themselves made few enquiries.

**Objective A5:** Three training evenings for ADI's were held by the Road Safety Unit in May and June 2009. The evenings were the main events where ADI's signed up to the YDCP Resource Pack. The evaluation was also explained to ADI's on these evenings and consent forms for taking part in the evaluation were signed and collected.

**Objective A6:** All Staffordshire County Council employees received advertisements for the Resource Pack through their wage slips in June and October.

**Objective A7:** A local press release was sent out by the County Council in August and this led to coverage by a local newspaper. The effectiveness of the publicity is reported in B2.

***Emergent issue: additional publicity***

As the Resource Pack developed, additional programme components were added, such as 'freebies' to the learners and promotional materials to the ADI's. Freebies included a mobile phone cover with the YDCP logo embossed, plus a winter driving kit. Comments from learners were that the fluorescent bag containing the winter driving kit was too bright to be used in public! ADI's did not receive the promotional car stickers or website logos until the end of the Resource Pack trial period which left some ADI's disappointed as they believed they would be in possession of these at the start. ADI's who were unaware of the promise of a car sticker did in fact suggest, unprompted, that a sticker would be useful in recruitment.

**5.3 Implementation Objectives**

Recruitment was the central component of the project's implementation objectives (B). Recruitment of learners and supervisors was lower than was hoped for but why this hope was not fully achieved is described in the sections below.

**Implementation Objective B1: ADI's to pass on details of potential YDCP learners to Staffordshire County Council for enrolment (local recruitment)**

It was predicted that some learners/supervisors would not contact the County Council directly but would hear of the YDCP straight from their ADI's. Thus there needed to be a system in place whereby the County Council would know who was using the Resource Pack. It was envisaged that ADI's would pass on the contact details of interested learners to the Road Safety Unit. The Road Safety Unit would then send the interested learners and supervisors consent forms to take part in the YDCP as well as information on the evaluation. Without this information flow there would be no accurate record of participants or interested participants, nor would there be any central data collection.

***Emergent issue: Database of YDCP learners and supervisors***

Although there was a successful maintained database of ADI's who had signed up to the Resource Pack, the second database of learners and supervisors was not able to be created in a complete format. For instance not all ADI's passed on details of interested learners so there was no accurate quantitative record of initial interest. Where these details were sent, they were either incomplete or they were not followed up with information about whether or not the families went on to consent and use the Resource Pack. Without this latter information drop-out rates could not be ascertained. Other ADI's began using the Pack with families before sending their contact details through to the County Council, or ADI's decided not to send details through because they deemed the families to be not using the Pack 'properly', e.g. the parents had the materials but were not actively using them.

Despite email and telephone communications with ADI's there may consequently still be families who used the Resource Pack in some way, but of whom the County Council and evaluation team were unaware.

One explanation for this lack of information flow and accurate record keeping was that ADI's were given paper copies of the consent forms, evaluation information sheets and questionnaires when they received their Resource Packs. Whilst this was legitimately done to prevent ADI's incurring any financial cost, for example by printing out questionnaires for those families who were not on-line, this act created confusion and over-burdened the ADI's. Some ADI's admitted over the telephone that the amount of paperwork contained in their box of Resource Packs had put them off giving the resource much attention. The paper evaluation information sheets, consent forms and questionnaires were also said to have been a deterrent to some families informed about the Pack.

With ADI's having their own copies of the forms there was also less incentive for them to pass on details to the Road Safety Unit for the enrolment process. This resulted in a disjointed approach to the signing up of learners and supervisors, and hindered the monitoring of Resource Pack users.

**Publicity: Objective B2: Staffordshire County Council to be contacted directly by learners via marketing campaign (central recruitment)**

One of the programme assumptions was that learners would hear about the Resource Pack through local publicity and contact Staffordshire County Council directly. Learners would then be given more information about the resource and be provided with a list of YDCP ADI's to contact. Although it was anticipated that learners might first learn of the Resource Pack from their ADI's, publicity led central recruitment was foreseen to be the main mechanism by which families joined.

Publicity included a press release to local newspapers which resulted in the project being covered by a popular newspaper and a photo-shoot with a sample of the recruited ADI's. Coverage was also given in the editorial of a county wide magazine, *Your Staffordshire*. The Resource Pack was also featured on the Council's website and on the website of the Safer Staffordshire Roads Partnership. Flyers were included in all of the County Council's employee pay-slips and flyers were also distributed to Staffordshire Year 11 school students, Connexions centres, and Fresher's Fayres. Additionally local community events were attended by the Road Safety Unit which included a manned stand in Stafford town shopping centre.

Despite these various attempts to inform learner drivers, parents and ADI's, the advertising either did not reach many of its intended participants or it was largely unsuccessful in its aim to recruit. Without evaluation of the publicity used, for example a count of all flyers actually delivered into the hands of students, it is not possible to say whether it was a failure of reach or a failure of impact. When asked what they thought would encourage others to sign up to the Resource Pack focus group members suggested more publicity:

*I think just knowledge of the existence of it would encourage more people because I think it was by pure chance that a lot of us got involved. A lot of the driving instructors my wife contacted didn't even mention it.*  
(Supervising driver focus group)



*When we were first looking for an instructor for our daughter we phoned eight people and out of the eight people only two mentioned it and we were prepared, we knew what to ask, and there were only two instructors who sold it and sold it properly. I think that might be a reason why it hasn't been passed on, people just don't know about it. My friend's daughter is learning to drive and she's never heard of it.  
(Supervising driver focus group)*

*I haven't had anybody sign up and say I've seen this, no-one has come from any adverts or marketing. It's been a case of me introducing it. (ADI focus group 2)*

*You've got to get out there and let people know because no-body's ever heard of it. Make sure that every driving instructor knows about it and asks the families. Even if the instructors only give out a leaflet out because no-body knows about it. You need to send out leaflets saying that this is what you're doing and how it will help improve your driving, it will help you know how your child is progressing, you'll be able to ask questions and get involved. I'm of the age where I've got friends with children the same age and Amy's got friends who are learning to drive, I could hand out leaflets. (Supervising driver focus group)*

The idea of a leaflet to be given out to learners and their parents was mooted by all respondents both individually and in the focus groups. In telephone conversations with the ADI's, it was frequently mentioned that ADI's had to actively „sell' the Resource Pack as opposed to passively recruiting learners who had already heard of the scheme. ADI's reported that the lack of seen publicity was a significant factor in the low rate of learner recruitment. A leaflet was recommended as a way to help explain the Resource Pack – offering parents information without requiring them to engage with the whole resource in order to make a decision about involvement:

*I would like to see a little bit more promotion and advertising out there. One thing I would like would be just a little sheet I could hand to them and say this is what we are doing, rather than having to hand them the book. (Supervising drivers focus group 2)*

*An A4 sheet would be nice because if we give them [parents] anymore they are not going to bother reading it are they but they would read an A4 sheet (Supervising drivers focus group 2)*

*I think it would be a good idea to have a front summary sheet, just an introduction to the scheme. (ADI focus group 2)*

The intra-Council advertising proved effective with families and ADI's being recruited as a result. An additional ADI was recruited as a result of a Council employee receiving the pay slip flyer and passing it on to her partner who was an ADI. The only two parents in the focus group who had heard of the Resource Pack before speaking to their driving instructors were both Council employees:

*I first saw mention of it just before my son started lessons on the Staffordshire County Council website because it's on the front page and I followed the link. I thought it looked interesting and when he started to learn to drive I asked his driving instructor and she was really pleased I'd mentioned it and she gave me materials and explained about it.  
(Supervising drivers focus group)*

*My daughter was walking around Stafford and the County Council had a little booth and my daughter came back with some leaflets from that. This was the end of last year [2008] so she kept those and she kept saying, 'Oh I'll be a safe driver if I do this'. Then we had a flyer in our wage slip and then I phoned Irene up and spoke to her about it before I was ready to look for a driving instructor. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

This latter comment also endorses Staffordshire County Council's use of a multi-media publicity campaign.

**Objective B3: All signed up ADI's to have received Resource Packs and distributed accordingly.**

One practical reason why young learners being taught by a YDCP ADI were unable to participate was because their ADI had not yet received the materials. ADI's heard about the scheme in May but the Resource Packs were not printed in their final trial version and distributed until September. ADI's reported reduced numbers of new learners last year in a highly competitive ADI price-market so many did not frequently have eligible new learners on their books.

The figure of seventeen families signed-up to the scheme does not include those who started using the Resource Pack but then stopped having lessons for financial reasons. As one ADI explained:

*A lot of my pupils have had to drop out of it because they've been made redundant. No money, no job, times are tough out there. The pound sign is the thing that weighs most heavily on their minds.*

*(ADI focus group 2)*

***Emergent issue: Timing of suitable young learners and Resource Pack distribution***

At the point when ADI's first signed up to the YDCP they may have had learners in an ideal position to use the Resource Pack but by the time ADI's physically received the Pack those learners had either passed or were close to taking their test. The objective for all signed-up ADI's to have received the Resource Packs was fully achieved but there was a delay of 3-4 months between ADI's first hearing about the scheme and physically having the materials ready to use. One ADI had a parent enquire about lessons using the Resource Pack as they had seen publicity for it but the ADI was not in possession of the Pack at that time, and so was unable to take it further.

It was envisioned by Staffordshire County Council that the Resource Pack could be used by both new and existing learners and that the Pack would still be useful for the learner part way through their formal instruction. One ADI did speak of actively using the Pack in this way - giving it to parents of learners close to taking their test for example:

*One I actually gave the book to because she was coming up to her test so she didn't do it properly but I did lend her the book for the two weeks before her test. Her parents were taking her out and they said that was very valuable.*

*(ADI focus group 2)*

From the phone calls with ADI's it became evident others had handed out the Pack in this way – each with learners approximately two weeks from the practical test. However, the majority of the ADI's in the focus groups felt that using the Resource Pack with more advanced learners was inadvisable and that learners would not wish to begin something new when their formal learning was coming to a close:

*I wouldn't go with an existing pupil; I wouldn't want to change horses in mid-stream. I wouldn't want to introduce this when they were close to taking their test; I think it might muddy the waters.*

*(ADI focus group 1)*

*I've got a pupil who does go out with family but didn't want to take on the course. I think it's because she's coming to her test and it was too late for her. That's the only objection I've had because she didn't think it was worth it.  
(ADI focus group 1)*

**Emergent issue: Why did not all 17-24 year old learner drivers sign up to the YDCP Resource Pack?**

**ADI Recruitment**

As only one-quarter of potential ADI's participated in the scheme not all learners received the same opportunity to take part. In May 2009, every ADI in Staffordshire County (350 in total) was invited to attend an open evening giving details about the YDCP. 69 ADI's attended this open evening and 80% of those recorded intent to sign up to the Resource Pack. The remaining 20% required further information before signing but all ADI's were interested in doing so. This reveals that all of the ADI's who heard the details of the Resource Pack thought that the concept of the project was an acceptable one. Since the open evening a further 16 ADI's were recruited following face to face meetings with Irene Williamson.

It is not known why only one-quarter of potential ADI's showed interest although the figure of 350 is the number of names of Staffordshire resident ADI's supplied to the Council by the DSA, unfiltered. Not all ADI's would have been able to make use of the Resource Pack regardless of their interest levels; for example some specialise in intensive courses, or in older drivers, or in Pass Plus work, or in automatic cars only, or in the training of other ADI's. The list of 350 ADI's supplied by the DSA may also not have been fully up to date as instructors move into examining or into alternative employment. The telephone calls to ADI's revealed that some lived on the border of the county and therefore did not actually teach many learners from within Staffordshire. For example an ADI living in Staffordshire but on the border of Warwickshire or West Midlands may conduct most of their business outside of the county.

A short survey was posted to a sample of ADI's who never attended an introduction session or met with the County Council about the Resource Pack. The survey asked if there were any particular reasons why they did not want to get involved. Four responses were received out of 28 mail-outs (14%). The comments were: „Too busy at the time', „having health problems at the time', and, „contacted the Council but did not hear back'.

Staffordshire County Council were aware from the beginning that ADI recruitment would be a rolling activity with not all ADI's signing up at once. This was reflected in the wording of implementation objective (B4).

**Objective B4: All existing and new 17-24 year old learner drivers taking lessons from a YDCP ADI, to be using Resource Packs**

There were both practical and socio-psychological reasons why even with a YDCP ADI, not all learners signed up to the project:-

**Emergent issue: Practical Barriers to Participation and Recruitment**

- **Not all young learner drivers are able to take private practice.**

As it was not an objective of the evaluation to contact learners and parents who were informed about the Resource Pack but whom declined, the only source of information about why they declined comes from the ADI's who introduced the pack to them. This information comes from focus group recordings and telephone conversations.

A key response from ADI's was that only a limited number of their learners were eligible to participate as not all young drivers had a suitable and/or insured car to practice in outside of lessons. If learners did not have their own cars they were reliant on their parent's cars or in some cases their partner's, but the family car was not always suitable due to the size and engine power. Some families also only possessed company cars which could not be used for teaching sons/daughters to drive.

ADI's reported a trend of learners buying a car *after* they have passed their test, claiming that many learners cannot afford both lessons and car insurance at the same time.

The issue of insurance was a dominant theme in the ADI focus groups:

*It's the insurance thing definitely. One lad tonight, he's got his own little car but it just sits on the drive at the moment. He says that he can't really afford to insure it and Mum's said 'we'll get you passed first and then insure it rather than going out and practising'. They can't afford lessons and the insurance.*

*(ADI focus group 2)*

*A young lad, parents are asking when he's going to be ready for them to take him out and were really keen. Now they've realised how much it's going to cost them to insure the car, it's going to be about £1000 to get insurance for the car so they now don't want to do it. So I've lost two [recruits for the Resource Pack] purely and simply because they've been unable to afford to drive. The problem is that people can't afford to actually drive cars. People say that when they've finished their lessons the money they spend on lessons is going on insurance.*

*(ADI focus group 1)*

*Everybody's been really keen it's just that financial problem of not having a car or may have a car but then decide to back off the insurance because they just can't afford it.*

*(ADI focus group 1)*

The learners who attended the focus group did have their own cars to practise in but were cognisant of their fortune as they discussed their friends who were learning to drive:

*LD1: Insurance is expensive*

*LD2: Yes it is. It would be a problem for some*

*LD3: I know a few people who haven't got a car to drive in*

*LD2: I do too*

*(Learner Driver focus group)*

Besides the cost of having an insured car to practice in, some learners were unable to privately practice because of the lack of a supervising driver. One ADI, for instance, reported that the majority of his learners were university students living away from home.

Staffordshire hosts two large universities in the north of the county so ADI's working in those areas would conceivably have learners without a parent or other supervising driver able to join the scheme.

ADI's in both the telephone conversations and in the focus groups believed that aside from the access barrier to would-be participants in the YDCP (e.g. not having an insured car to practice in) there was a significant interest barrier. This interest barrier was predominantly held by the parents rather than the young learners themselves. ADI's reported that learners were often keen to be involved but without active engagement from their parents, that

interest went no further. Parents were the key to successful recruitment in both a primary and secondary way. For example parents either followed the interest of their learners (secondary) or they were the lead of this interest (primary).

The problem of parental interest could be divided into two main issues: parents not interested in being responsible for teaching their learner to drive, and parents interested in supervising but not interested in committing to the YDCP Resource Pack.

#### **5.4 Socio-psychological barriers to participation**

- **Parents do not think it is their job to teach their children to drive**

*Some parents just aren't that keen to get involved. They tend to shove it all onto you saying 'we'll pay you to do it'. I don't like to say that it's washing their hands but they're paying you to go off and do it, don't bother them about it, and bring them back when they've passed. (ADI focus group 2)*

*I think there is a culture, there is an off-loading element of parents. It's 'go on' go off to cubs, go off to scouts, you're out of my hair, go on your driving lessons. There doesn't seem to be the involvement of parents with young people. (ADI focus group 2)*

*Although he was laughing when he said it I've had one lad come out with, 'My Dad says that he pays you to teach me to drive'. (ADI focus group 1)*

In telephone conversations ADI's described how this „type' of parent does not see their involvement as extending beyond sourcing the driving lessons and seeing their child pass the test:

*The parents don't seem as if they want to play any major part at all, they just want their learners to get licensed as quickly as possible. (ADI telephone conversation)*

However contrary to the view that it is not the parents ‚job' to teach their children to drive, there are other parents who do see themselves as having a more direct role to play in the learning process.

*I think it's a major part of anybody's life taking their driving test and it's quite a nervous experience and it can take six months or even two years to get through so I just feel that I want to be involved in that part of her life and understand what she's going through as well. (Supervising driver focus group)*

*Some parents will say it's the ADI's job but then there are some parents that will say, 'yes I would like to give them a bit of practice'. (ADI focus group 2)*

*The supervising driver, (mother), had already asked me for advice and asked if there was any support material. (ADI questionnaire response for why the ADI recommended the learner for the YDCP Resource Pack)*

There were therefore other reasons for why parents did not participate:

- **Parents do not think they need the support of the Resource Pack to supervise**

ADI's found that some parents were not interested in joining the scheme because they were already actively supervising and felt that they did not need the help. If parents were already

taking out their learner for private practice they were less likely to agree to participate in the Pack because they did not perceive a need for the support. In some cases, where ADI's knew the parents and had given them verbal advice, they agreed that they would probably manage ok without the materials, "They wouldn't be doing anything any different anyway", (ADI).

This finding of parents managing private practice well enough without the resource was in the minority but there was another reason why some parents felt they did not need the Resource Pack:

*It depends on the parent really. I've given my crib sheets out to parents before now and they've gone for their test in their own car because I've said I don't think you're test ready and they've come back and they've said they failed and said ;when I got there the examiner made a fuss about me not having a rear view mirror'. I said 'well that was on your crib notes for parents what happened to your sheet that I gave you?'. He said 'oh when my Dad saw that he said no-body's telling me how to drive', he screwed it up and threw it in the bin. (ADI focus group 2)*

This ADI was recounting an incident that occurred before the Resource Pack was available when the ADI made her own handouts to give to learners and parents. The story was given as an example of the parental attitude she still experienced from some parents who object to being given driving advice from a learner driver instructor.

Contrary to this group of parents, there were some who believed in supervising their learners (and were able to do so) but who also recognised that they needed additional support. There was a fear though of what they would be signing up to and this fear of the unknown prevented some families from joining:

- **Parents do not think they have time to commit to a formal scheme**

ADI's spoke of parents' concerns about the amount of time involved in signing up to a project where their involvement was asked to be regular and structured. ADI's told how learners often come from families where both parents work full time and/or run their own businesses and so have a very restricted amount of available time. As well as the time input, parents were also said to be daunted by the degree of new knowledge they would be expected to learn and by the size of the supervisor's guide book. There were also some more negative comments from ADI's stating that parents who *could* take part in the scheme approved of the concept behind the Resource Pack and appreciated it could help but did not engage beyond the point of thinking it a good idea. "They're all interested in the idea but apathy takes front seat and they don't put the effort in. It's a bit of a damp squib" (ADI telephone call).

*I approached the parents and said look this is the sort of thing we are doing and I let them look at the book first. Initially they said yeah it sounds like a good idea but then they had a good look at the book and said, 'heavens, that's just too involved for me', and they just bottled out completely. (ADI focus group 1)*

*There was one parent that had a look at the book and said 'no, no, no, no, it's over the top it's way over the top'. They took a look through it and yes there's a glossary of terms but as soon as they started hitting the abbreviations they just threw their arms up in the air and gave up. (ADI focus group 1)*

These reports of parents being worried about the level of involvement required and the amount of „work' expected of them, were borne out in comments made by the supervising drivers who did sign up to the Resource Pack:

*There was a certain amount of commitment on my behalf so it was that decision, can I actually commit to this? Her driving lessons are during the day so I obviously need to take time off work so it's little things like that. You need to understand what you're committing yourself to rather than it coming as a surprise further down the line. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*It comes down simply to the time factor as much as anything because we're all busy, busy with work or other circumstances. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*When you've got three teenagers and everything else and you're ill yourself, although we were wholeheartedly in it and put our hearts into it, otherwise we wouldn't have bothered doing it, it still doesn't take top priority in life. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

A later quote by this particular parent however shows that although they felt some worry about how much input they were *expected* to dedicate to the scheme, the *actual* amount of input required was within reason:

*It's not a lot of work to have to do really is it, let's face it you're not asking somebody to commit their lives but it might save somebody's life.*

Another parent reported a similar experience of their initial perceptions of the Resource Pack: thinking it to be more intense than it was:

*When I first saw the actual book itself I thought, 'oh crikey', to be quite honest with you and then when you get to actually look through it it's in clear detail, and it's very, very good. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

This finding is supported by the view of one ADI in believing the initial recruitment decision by parents to be more challenging than their consequent involvement in the scheme:

*It seems that once they're in the scheme they're very keen to do it, It's just getting them over that hurdle of starting it, so it's about trying to overcome that inertia. (ADI focus group 1)*

Although ADI's reported that the majority of non-recruits were a result of either the lack of the opportunity to privately practice and/or the lack of parental commitment, not all learners themselves were interested in joining. In the telephone conversations with ADI's, learners who did not participate in the Resource Pack were said to have lacked interest for two main reasons: independence, and wanting to pass their test quickly.

*It all depends if the child wants to do it as well. (ADI focus group 1)*

- **Young learner drivers are driving for independence**

ADI's mentioned that when told about the Resource Pack, some learners shied away as they felt it embarrassing to have their parents involved and just wanted their driving lessons to be a matter between them and their instructor.

*I asked two other pupils but they weren't particularly keen, they put two and two together and made five, the, 'I don't want to be spied on', attitude. I explained what it was all about but it was, 'I'd rather not if you don't mind'. (AD focus group 1)*

This desire for privacy also extended to the evaluation team as some learners understandably did not want to be part of a trial or to have to complete surveys:

*They were just not too keen on form filling and getting other people involved, they'd rather keep it on a one-to-one basis, they don't want to go into anything organised. (ADI focus group 1)*

These ADI reports of learners declining to participate in the Resource Pack because they wanted to be independent from their parents were confirmed by the learners who did participate – as they held an opposite view to their peers:

*Your parents should be there for you and helping you through it all so you're not by yourself. (Learner driver, female)*

*It really helped having my parents involved (Learner driver, male)*

The learners also reported little concern with the evaluation paperwork:

*It wasn't a problem; it's just having the time really (Learner driver, male)*

*I filled it in and thought it was easy (Learner driver, female)*

A common response from all ADI's was that some learners were not interested because they just wanted to do what they had to in order to pass their test, learners did not want to know about optional extras, „Some pupils couldn't give a monkey's, they just want to pass their test':

- **Young learner drivers want to pass their test as quickly as possible**

*At the end of the day I think what they want is to go for the test, pass the test, have the piece of paper: that's my license, and be off. (ADI focus group 1)*

Passing the test quickly, however, was also important to the learners who joined up, and they even cited it as a reason for doing so:

*Practising makes you more confident and then you'll be able to pass your test quicker because a lesson these days is like £22 and when you're only out for an hour or so it's nothing but when you're out with your parents you can go for miles. (Learner driver, female)*

*You'll get more practice and you'll probably pass faster. Get more hours with Mum and Dad. (Learner driver, male)*

Some ADI's harnessed this motivation and used it to try and encourage both learners and parents to take part:

*I think a lot of them want to pass their test first time for obvious reasons but when you think what it costs to take your test, it's about £100, in raw terms that's 4 or 5 lessons isn't it so have another 4 or 5 lessons and do it first time. That's the way I look at it. (ADI focus group 1)*

*I feel that it's a good selling point if the parent's feel that as an instructor we're going the extra mile to try and encourage their children to, dare we say, pass their test quicker, as well as be a safe driver obviously, then I think they're more likely to recommend you to somebody else if they feel you're more than just an average instructor who just wants to teach to get his money. (ADI focus group 1)*



## 5.5 Motives for joining the YDCP Resource Pack

Questionnaire responses show the benefits which learners and supervisors expected to get from signing up to the Resource Pack. Learners were asked to list the three main benefits in order of first, second, and third. The benefits given in first place (open text responses) were categorised in the data analysis and these categories were:

- To improve skills
- To become a more experienced driver
- To be a safer driver

Passing the test quicker was also given as a response but only received mention as the third benefit. This may reflect differences in respondents' understanding of the question with some learners answering what they thought the Resource Pack was designed to achieve and other learners answering with what they personally desired to achieve. The questionnaire responses may have also been affected by social desirability bias with learners offering the answers they felt the evaluation team wanted to hear. It was unclear whether the motive of passing their test quicker was connected more to economy or mobility, i.e. to save money or to have independent transport. Understanding these motives can help explain the interest in the Resource Pack and, therefore, offer suggestions for publicity messages to trigger interest in those families not currently engaging with the scheme.

### Parent motives

The main benefits expected from the scheme according to the small number of parents who completed the questionnaires were divided between safer driving and passing the test. Table 1 shows the main categories of response given by parents to the question, „Please tell us what the three main benefits you expect to get from participation in the Programme are’:

**Table 1: The three main benefits supervising drivers expected from the Resource Pack (n=5)**

First Given Expected Benefits	Second Given Expected Benefits	Third Given Expected Benefits
To help son/daughter pass their test	To understand ADI teaching methods	To improve own knowledge of current driving regulations
To help son/daughter be a safer driver	Better use of practice time	To make son/daughter a better driver in the long-term
To help son/daughter progress	More responsible attitudes	

This division of motive, although not mutually exclusive, was also raised by the ADI's in the focus groups:

*Parents definitely want their children to pass quicker because of the value for money and the credit crunch. At the moment it's a little off-set between Dad wants them to pass quick because he's paying and Mum wants them to stay a learner so that they're not let loose on the roads yet. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*A lot of it's to do with attitude. You tend to get people who right from the start are determined their child's going to be a safe driver and will do anything for that within cost, they will literally do anything they possibly can to help and then you have others who just want to get them a license and that's it. (Supervising driver focus group)*

For the parents in the focus group, however, their principal motivation for joining the Resource Pack, and for choosing the instructor they selected, was that of safety:

*You've obviously got the big businesses out there which are just making a profit and then you have the ADI who definitely cares about what he's doing. He wants to make sure that when that person passes the test they are going to be safe; they are not just after a quick pass time. The YDCP gives you more confidence in what you are doing for your child. (Supervising driver focus group)*

*I think we just wanted to use the pack to get our daughter through driving. I had an horrendous experience when I started to drive and my husband the same so we wanted to use the right language and we used the pack. All that was coming into my head from this was, 'it must be safer, it's got to be safer'. (Supervising driver focus group)*

*What attracted me was having the information but also the safety aspect because that worries me, teenagers especially lads, learning to drive. (Supervising driver focus group)*

*Our instructor's a bit different, he's the cheapest but that's not why we went for him. He seems to be in it very much for keeping teenagers safe, it isn't about the money. (Supervising driver focus group)*

One parent spoke not just of on-road safety but of confidence in their daughters' personal safety:

*Parents have got to be involved haven't they, well I think they should be unless their child says no. Don't forget that I'm paying for half of this that's one thing, the other thing is I need to know that she's safe. Now she's safer with Rick [ADI] than she is with me whilst driving but you're phoning up an instructor and most people are waving them off with somebody they don't even know. I've got to trust a man with my daughter and you know what things you hear about driving instructors. Because of this scheme I got to know Rick so I wasn't sending her out with some man that I didn't know. (Supervising driver focus group)*

Another parent had not realised that the Resource Pack was a scheme to opt-in to but had thought it an additional resource which all ADI's distributed. He, therefore, did not have a particular reason for taking part although he revealed a different safety motive when describing the Resource Pack as a source of support for the forbidding task of teaching his child to drive:

*[I've had] no experience of supervising anybody before, it's been many years since I learned to drive and it was quite daunting taking somebody out for the first time as a learner. It was useful having a resource to actually look at and to refresh yourself on how things should be done. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

These feelings of anxiety in supervising their learners were shared by other parents:  
*I haven't taken anyone driving before, only Dan. I was very nervous at first but I'm ok now. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*I don't think I'm confident as a passenger to be able to go out with her yet to be honest so I think we'll need a few more lessons. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

SD1: *It is quite nerve racking*  
 SD2: *And your foot's forever on the pedal*  
 SD3: *Pushing it to the floor*  
 SD4: *Always holding the door handles. I was very nervous at first*  
 SD2: *Same here, I was holding onto the seat*  
 SD1: *It's a matter of gaining confidence in them*  
 SD2: *If they feel your nerves it makes them feel worse doesn't it*  
 (Supervising drivers focus group)

This parental worry was also reported by the learners:

*I think it was more worry for them because they've never seen me drive before. For the first couple of weeks when driving my mom would hold onto the seat (Learner driver focus group)*

## 5.6 How best to recruit learners and parents

The factors necessary for recruitment to the YDCP Resource Pack have already been identified (Table 2) but how ADI's explain the Pack and actively enrol the families is just as important.

**Table 2: Conditions needed for recruitment of learners and supervisors**

Condition	Required
ADI signed up to the Resource Pack	✓
ADI in possession of Resource Pack materials	✓
New young driver interested in the Resource Pack	✓
New young driver interested in the Pack and has an insured car to practice in	✓
New young driver interested in the Pack and has a legal supervising driver	✓
Supervising driver interested in taking part in the Resource Pack	✓

For parents who had not seen any publicity for the Resource Pack, the information from their learner's ADI was the only basis for their initial understanding of the scheme. This information was communicated directly to parents or via the learner. From the focus group participants it was clear that ADI's had the most success in recruiting when they communicated directly with both parents and learners:

AD1: *I showed the book to one of my pupils who I thought would be a good candidate and she raised an eyebrow and I could tell she was thinking it's a big book but nevertheless she still seemed quite interested and she said she'd go and speak to her Dad because he'd promised to take her out, and then when you get to the next lesson, it's 'Oh I never got round to asking him and I must ask him next time', and then when I go for the lesson she's always in the house on her own because it's before her mom and dad get home from work. I think there's inertia as well there, inertia of I must get round to talking to my dad about it.*

AD2: *I've introduced the idea to the pupil but then said I'd like to talk to mum and dad, whoever it's going to be who's involved. From my experience if you just involve the pupil there's no-one to prod them and kick them to do anything. I gave my young lad the letter and two weeks later I happened to see his mom and asked if they'd posted the letter back. His mum said, 'What letter? If he's got it I'll get it off him and do it'. These young pupils are very focused on some things but not quite so focused on others. (ADI focus group 1)*

*I introduce it to the children first but then I speak to the parents if they're in when I get back from lessons and try and sell it on the idea it's an absolutely amazing scheme, what it does is it brings you as the parent, me as the instructor and your son/daughter together and just think of the three of us working together, how we are going to help your son or daughter to be better and safer at driving. (ADI focus group 1)*

The effectiveness of ADI's speaking directly with parents as well as learners was corroborated by the learner driver's own accounts of how they came to be involved in the YDCP. They explained that their families' final decisions to participate had been parent lead:

*My mum and dad went along with it and I just went along with it too, I didn't really have the choice but it sounds good.  
(17 year old, female)*

*It got introduced to me on my first lesson and I didn't really know much about it but my Dad joined my second lesson with me and it got explained to him then and he just went along with it as it sounded like it would help him and me understand stuff better.*

*(17 year old, female)*

*My parents went straight for it so I tagged along really. The instructor came round to our house as well.*

*(18 year old, male)*

The active role of the parents was critical in joining the scheme and all of the parents in the focus group had personal meetings with the ADI's via home visits or lesson sit-ins.

*The driving instructor asked my son if he'd like to do it and he came round and asked me and I said yes. The driving instructor came round and we had a talk with Tom and that's what we did. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*Our instructor came round and he explained it all to me and we went through it all and it all seemed, and it is, a very good programme to get onto. It's beneficial for everyone as far as I can see. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*It was Sarah's driving instructor; he came round to the house and went through it all with us because we'd never heard about it before. He showed us everything; Sarah had had a couple of lessons at that point. He went through the book with us asked us if we were interested in doing it and we both said yes.*

*After a few weeks I went out and had a lesson in the back seat and the instructor mentioned the pack and showed it to me initially and shortly after she actually sent it back with Isabelle. I assumed that any tips and help would be useful and it's very clear-cut, easy to understand and follow.*

Recruitment of families was easier for ADI's who already built meeting the parents into their routine way of working:

*Perhaps 50% of my customers I would go and see their parents on a regular basis so because of that I think it has been quite easy just to say I have got something extra to help you now. (Supervising driver focus group)*

### **Objective B5: Continued recruitment and training of ADI's post YDCP launch**

Recruitment of ADI's was on-going and ADI's individually contacted Irene Williamson after the YDCP launch. There was one occasion where an ADI made contact after hearing about the scheme from a parent. The Parent had telephoned the YDCP ADI's on the list provided by the County Council but they then also contacted ADI's who were not on the list, in search

of a cheaper price. The non-YDCP ADI subsequently enquired about joining the Resource Pack.

Throughout the evaluation period Irene Williamson arranged to make one half-day available every week to personally meet with interested ADI's and explain the Pack.

### **Objective B6: All Supervising drivers to have been assessed and/or sat-in on their learners' lessons with the ADI**

In the first draft of the logic model, objective B6 was included as compulsory: all supervising drivers using the Resource Pack were to either be assessed by an approved independent driving instructor or to sit-in on at least three of their learner's lessons. After the open evenings with ADI's, however, this was changed to optional due to instructors remarking that parents would not want either an assessment or to sit-in. ADI's felt that because parents did not show a level of interest before the scheme, the sit-in or assessment would deter them from participating if it remained compulsory. There was also some unease amongst instructors as to who would pay for the supervising driver assessments and who would be allowed to conduct them.

#### ***Emergent issue: Supervising driver assessments and lesson sit-ins***

Although initial expectations amongst ADI's were that sit-ins would prove unpopular, they in fact turned out to be an important factor in the recruitment of families and in use of the Resource Packs.

As seen in the results on how best to recruit learners and parents, the lesson sit-in offered a direct opportunity for parents and ADI's to communicate with each other:

*The Father expressed a wish to sit-in on a few lessons and advised me he would be helping his daughter to drive. (ADI Questionnaire response for why the ADI recommended the learner for the YDCP Resource Pack)*

As well as providing ADI's with a convenient time and place for introducing the Resource Pack, the sit-in helped parents to understand how their learner was being taught:

*From sitting in I knew how he spoke to her, he was nice and quiet and it just showed me how to teach her. It was like, 'Sarah there's a hazard coming up', and I wouldn't have thought about saying that. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*I can't speak highly enough of sitting in the back of the instructor's car and picking up the way that he's speaking and what he's saying and how he's doing certain things so I'm almost a bit afraid of stepping on his toes when he's not there by telling Becky to do something else. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

The above quote also demonstrates how the sit-in consolidates the aim of helping parents provide more efficient private practice by not contradicting their child's formal driver training.

Concurring with the prediction that parents would reject the opportunity to sit-in, one parent described how she dismissed the opportunity on the assumption that her son would not be comfortable sharing his lesson space. The other parents in the group, however, had already sat-in and spoke so positively about the experience that they persuaded her to reconsider:

*SD1: I felt that I wouldn't be doing everything because one of the things it suggests is sitting in the instructors car but I just didn't honestly think my son would be happy with that so I thought well if he's not that's fine we can still do the rest of it and do the bits that are appropriate*

*SD2: I felt the same as you I thought she is not going to like me sitting in the back of that car! But she was fine, absolutely fine*

*SD3: I actually really enjoyed the experience because you know they're dual controlled*

*SD4: Yeah! I felt very safe in the back*

*SD3: I really did enjoy it, it was a good hour spent. I highly recommend it*

*SD4: Yes definitely*

*SD1: Maybe that's something I need to continue discussions on*

The learners of these parents who had sat-in gave similar positive reports:

*My Dad sat in on my second lesson...my instructor said that if my parents ever wanted to come along they're welcome to so it was her idea for him to sit in. I just forgot that he was there.*

*(Learner driver focus group)*

*All parents and learners should do it because then parents can see how much progress learners are making. They should do it more than once, after a period of time, so you know where you are and your parents know better about how you're doing when you're driving with your instructor.*

*(Learner driver focus group)*

### **Objective B7: ADI's adhere to code of conduct**

The code of conduct for the YDCP Resource Pack recognised that instructors do not all work in the same way and variations therefore in the mode of teaching using the Resource Pack were expected. ADI's signed to accept the principles of the resource in helping learners progress by encouraging supervising drivers to be involved. ADI's signed to support supervising drivers through the use of the record book and information guide. The code of conduct states that: „Instructors are expected to...be responsible for the distribution and completion of the Supervising Drivers' Information Guide and Drivers' Record Book.

Focus group participants disclosed a lack of uniformity in how the record books were completed by ADI's with some ADI's taking more time and effort to complete the books than others. One parent was surprised by the mention of ticks written in learners' record books as their own instructor had not been filling anything in:

*SD1: When she comes back from her lessons she comes back with these ticks in her boxes and with little sketches that the instructor's done*

*SD2: Can I just ask about these ticks, is everybody else round the table getting ticks in the boxes when they're coming back from their driving lessons?*

*SD3: No*

*SD4: Not from every lesson, some of them have been filled in*

*SD5: The driving instructor marks it, Dan doesn't bring it back with him though*

*SD2: The reason I ask is that I mentioned that I was coming tonight and I don't know if a bit of panic set in but the explanation that I got was he didn't want to tick all the boxes yet until he was fully confident that Becky was at that sort of lesson because once you tick the box you tend to think, oh that's been done that has, so I think better explanation is needed for the driving instructors about when they should be ticking these boxes, I don't know if it's some sort of communication problem.*

The learners also gave an account of incomplete and irregular record book filling with ADI's not ensuring the books were brought to lessons:

*To be fair we don't really use it, not even my instructor, we haven't actually been writing anything in or looking at it properly. (Learner driver focus group)*

*My instructor's wrote a bit in but I always forget to give it back to her for her to fill it all in. (Learner driver focus group)*

The discussion of ticks shows a lack of understanding amongst parents and ADI's about how the record books were meant to be used. For each topic in the driver's record book there are eight boxes at the bottom of the page which were designed *for the supervisor* to record a number (1-4) in each box charting the learners' progress. After each practice session a box is meant to be filled in by the supervisor rating the degree of independence with which the learner managed certain driving skills. By the supervisor regularly completing the boxes the ADI would then be able to see how well the learner had been progressing out of lessons and how much practice each topic had received. There are open text boxes for ADI's and supervisors to record qualitative comments and an area for ADI's to sign when they feel the learner is competent to practice those topics with a non-professional supervisor.

Some ADI's also mentioned ticks in the telephone conversations conducted as part of this research, saying that they hadn't been ticking the books because they disagreed with a blanket sign-off approach, preferring instead to rely on in-depth verbal feedback. Use or otherwise of the record book reflects use of a specific written tool for recording progress between ADI, learner and parent. The absence of such use does not necessarily reflect the absence of effective ADI-learner-parent communication.

Although the majority of learning teams did not use the Resource Pack materials in an integral way and as prescribed by the Resource Pack designers, it should be noted that there were individual families and ADI's who fully embraced the Pack and the way it was intended to be used. These individuals however, were unusual in their adherence to the programme.

## **5.7 Programme Outputs**

**Programme Outputs: C1: Supervising drivers actively using the Information Guide and Record Book as monitored by individual ADI's and quality assurance processes.**

*Any private practice that is done properly is good but it is the emphasis on the properly and the Resource Pack helps the parents to do it properly. If we can assume Mum and Dad are going to read it of course. (ADI focus group 2)*

### ***Emergent issue: How the Resource Pack was used by learners and supervisors***

As described above there was little consistency amongst learning teams about how the Resource Pack materials were used. Use of the materials by instructors was varied and this idiosyncratic pattern of use was also found amongst the learners and parents.

- Use of the drivers' record book

ADI's reported that learners' use of the driver's record book ranged from keeping the book on the shelf to keeping the book with them for lessons and practice:

*I've given it [drivers record book] to learners when they've got to the stage where they're starting to go out with parents. Because they were going out I've offered them the book, done it all up to date and then said something to them a couple of weeks later and it's just been: Oh I think that's in my wardrobe...But then there's another one who turns up with his book every time and the family are keen for me to go into the house and say what's happened and what we've been going through on the lesson. (ADI focus group 2)*

Furthermore, genuine joined-up working required a three-way relationship with parents also involved. Although some learners did take their book to their lessons for the instructor to fill in, the books were not always then looked at by their parents. This mode of use was accepted by some ADI's who continued to complete the driver's book in order for parents to have a record of the topics covered when supervising the learner.

*I know Peter's got one of those [record book] but I haven't seen it since the first couple of lessons. I perhaps have to ask him if there are any comments in it because I don't think he'd tell me otherwise. (Supervising driver focus group)*

*The driving instructor marks it but Dan doesn't bring it back with him. (Supervising driver focus group)*

*If they bring the record book with them I'll say have you had any private practice and they'll say yeah I've been out a couple of times and I'll look in the back of the book and it's been blank so I'll say did you find it useful and they'll say yeah I showed Mom and she knew what we'd been doing. (ADI focus group 2)*

In explaining why his parent does not use the record book one learner unintentionally revealed one of the benefits of the book!

*My Mum doesn't like all the work, writing it down, so that's why she doesn't like using it. She does take me out but she doesn't write it down until about ten days later and then she thinks, 'oh no I've forgotten'. (Learner driver focus group)*

Confusion over how the record book should be used was repeated in parents' discussions of how they practised „signed off' topics. Some parents understood well the intention of the ADI's signature:

*The drivers' record book tells you that they're competent for you to actually take them out. I think that's really useful because you know then that you're not going to be doing something that they haven't actually covered or that they're not actually competent to be doing with just parental supervision. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

Other parents, however, interpreted signed-off competent topics as being areas which no longer required particular attention:

*Anything that John [ADI] had ticked her off as being able to do, I wouldn't ignore it because I'm sitting with her and you've got to be watching everything but I didn't concentrate on it, I would concentrate on what he'd said to do and of course I could see if she was getting any better. There were also things that I knew if he hadn't written anything I knew to leave it because he needed to do that with her. (Supervising drivers focus group)*



*It was being able to look if I wasn't sure, being able to look at what Paul [ADI] had written in it so I wasn't wasting Sarah's time or my own by doing things that she had already done. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

This latter comment by a parent confirms the concerns expressed by ADI's and is particularly reminiscent of one ADI's explanation of why they had not been 'ticking boxes':

*The reason I ask is that I mentioned that I was coming tonight and I don't know if a bit of panic set in but the explanation that I got was he didn't want to tick all the boxes yet until he was fully confident that Becky was at that sort of lesson because once you tick the box you tend to think, oh that's been done that has, so I think better explanation is needed for the driving instructors about when they should be ticking these boxes, I don't know if it's some sort of communication problem. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

ADI's also worried that learners can hold the same mis-interpretation of competence 'ticks' as signifying a topic has been successfully completed:

*Just because you do a bay park well the first time that's not the end of it, it doesn't mean you're never going to have to practise it again. The lads think, 'oh ticked' bay park that's it done, next week I'll do...I only need five more lessons then I've done everything and I can take my test. (ADI focus group 2)*

- Use of the supervising drivers information guide

The driver's record book was designed to be used by all three parties: the learner, the parent and the ADI. The supervising driver's information guide was specifically written for the supervisor so it was harder for ADI's to monitor use especially if ADI's did not have routine face-to-face meetings with parents. Although, even without face-to-face meetings the Resource Pack successfully facilitated ADI-parent communication, via the learner.

*I've one signed up at the moment, he's the child of a chap I taught some years ago. He was very keen straight away and joined in the first week of the scheme. I showed him all of the information and he said yes straight away. He brings his book out almost every week but whether the book that's in the house gets seen a great deal I don't know. I've not seen the parents' book but he does come up with questions from his Dad, his Dad **sends** [original emphasis] questions, which wouldn't have happened without the Pack. (ADI focus group 2)*

Parents engaged with the Resource Pack materials in flexible ways, principally by using the supervising drivers' information guide as a reference book; – as something to refer to when questions or conflict arose. ADI's, learners and parents were universal in their entirely positive accounts of how the Resource Pack helped to avoid or solve conflicts:

Supervising drivers

*Personally we looked through it when we got it and tried to remember bits of it and then when we've actually been out and done something, we can come back to it and look to see where we've perhaps gone wrong – just things I've not been sure about, the actual procedure if it's a manoeuvre, just the procedure to go back and check it, just a resource like that. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*When we're out I'll say, 'should you do it like that?', and Ben will say, 'you do it that way', and the book is something for us to refer to, you've got something to relate to. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*It is something to relate to at a glance. We're not taking it with us when we go out with Dan, we relate to it on the way back. If there have been any particular issues we can double check and then we have it in mind for next time. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*The learners are gaining from our experience because we've got more confidence with them and something to refer to when there are slight differences in opinion. It nearly always explains that Isabelle's right so I'm the one who's always wrong. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*Whenever we went out and John [ADI] wasn't there we'd refer to the book and go with whatever the book said. Then we'd all look at what happened and discuss it so things didn't get forgotten. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

Learners

*I say, 'let me do it how I think is right', sometimes I refer to the book. (Learner drivers focus group)*

*Sometimes we shout at each other, like it was my right of way at a junction and I pulled out, Dad said it wasn't my right of way it was theirs and we argued and argued and argued. Then he went and read the book and he went, 'Oh yeah'. (Learner driver focus group)*

ADI's

*It is definitely helping reduce arguments; I think it's working quite well. (ADI focus group 2)*

*They seem quite delighted with it, they say it has resolved a lot of arguments. This girl and her mother were constantly arguing but now they say, 'the book says', and it has solved a load of arguments so they are pleased with that. (ADI focus group 2)*

*The feedback from my learners is all positive because it resolves arguments that they have had with their parents and they can say it's not only their instructor that says it but it is here in the book. (ADI focus group)*

Using the books as a reference point instead of a tool for planning sessions ahead of time reflects the adhoc nature of parent supervised practice.

*I don't actually take it with us because we don't do structured lessons as such. If we're going somewhere we'll go and then if the opportunity arises we'll do a bay park or something. It's not structured we don't decide where we're going and what we're going to do, it just happens and we do it, day to day journeys, Isabelle will drive us whenever the opportunity arises. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

### **C2: Equal number of Resource Packs loaned out to learners and supervising drivers as those signed up to the YDCP Resource Pack**

More Resource Packs were loaned out than families signed up to using them. This was as a result of ADI's giving parents the information guide to look through whilst they considered joining the scheme. Not all of the guides were returned by those families who decided against taking part.

### **C3: Database of learner's stage of participation in the YDCP**

As mentioned in objective B1 a complete database of learners was not established. The database contained only those details passed on by the ADI's. When those learners were contacted as part of the evaluation further details were recorded such as whether or not they had used the pack and whether they were still currently taking lessons.

## 5.8 Linking Constructs

### **Linking Constructs: D1: Harmonious relationship between the three members of the learning team**

As seen in C1, (Programme Outputs), active use of the Resource Pack cultivated harmonious relationships between ADI-learner-and-supervisor through the resolution of conflict. With the supervising driver's information guide parents were re-assured that how their learner was driving was in fact the advised method even though it was not the method they used themselves. The guide supported what the ADI was teaching and acted as a neutral referee for issues arising during practice sessions.

### **D1: More efficient formal instruction**

With less conflict and less contradiction of the professional instruction it is reasonable to surmise that learners' lessons were more efficient. With parents using the record book to follow the instructors in the areas privately practised and with ADI's having to un-do less bad habits the learners using the Resource Pack can be said to have had more efficient driving experience.

### **D3: Increased amount of beneficial private practice undertaken**

Although the pre- and post- questionnaires would have provided a comparison of amount of private practice time before and after use of the Resource Pack, there were insufficient post-responses to provide reliable findings for this element at this time. The existing questionnaires, however, could be used in future evaluations of the Resource Pack.

### **D4: More effective structure of learning**

More effective structured learning was one of the mechanisms through which the Resource Pack materials were expected to ultimately reduce road crashes. Although private practice is not traditionally as structured as formal lessons are, YDCP families reported some effect on how they structured their practice sessions. Parents reported that they worked with their instructors and took their advice on when to begin taking their learners out, and then on what areas to practise and when:

*Initially we waited until Diane (ADI) told us that she thought Isabelle could cope with private practice so we didn't rush into anything, we just went back to the areas where Diane had taken Isabelle. We followed her advice and it has influenced how we did things. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*It [the resource] got you together with your instructor and you knew exactly what you'd got to do with her and what you could forget, you knew what you didn't need to go through, say reversing round corners. There were things that John could say, 'look don't even bother with that at the moment' whereas if we weren't on this scheme, I wouldn't have known. (Supervising drivers focus group).*

The Resource Pack further helped to more effectively structure private practice sessions as the driver's record book gave parents a greater idea of their learner's progress.

*If parents have got the drivers book they can see what we've done, they can see that we haven't gotten into any heavy traffic yet so driving Dad into Derby for a football match is probably not a good idea. (ADI focus group 2)*

*It's a way of keeping up with how they are actually doing and keeping them safe by me not doing the wrong thing. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*If it's the same sort of issue that comes up with Dan's driving that means it's more of a problem. We could easily forget about it but then you go back to the book and you remember which is why I think it's good. You've always got it in the forefront of your mind. (Supervising drivers focus group).*

*It got all of us together and it wasn't just Sarah and John it was me as well. It's a team effort then instead of the mother not knowing what's going on unless she goes out and asks. I knew what was going on all the time and I got to know John myself. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

Referring back to the economy motive in learning to drive, parents also identified that having a better idea of their child's progress gave them a sense of financial accountability of the money spent on lessons.

*I know I'm not wasting my money because I know from that book that she's learnt this, this and this each week. You knew exactly what she'd done that week, you know if they're getting somewhere or not. I've got friends and they've said their child is nowhere near the test and they've had 40 lessons. With these books you'd know the reason why you know what's going on so you don't need to think that the instructor is ripping you off. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

#### **D5: Increased amount of on-road driving experience and exposure**

As well as asking participants to record how often learners had received private supervision the questionnaires also included a question on how often they had been taking professional lessons. This would have recorded the amount of on-road driving experience but as with D3 there was insufficient data to report on this.

#### **D6: ADI under less pressure has more time to address attitudinal issues**

This construct was not addressed in the current evaluation.

#### **D7: Increased confidence of the learning team in the progression made by the learner driver**

Parents in the focus groups reported an increased confidence in supervising their learners. It would be expected that this increased confidence would have translated into additional beneficial practice.

*Things have changed and I learned to drive a long time ago and quite a few things have changed, roads are an awful lot busier than when I learned to drive but I thought the guidance was very clear, the suggestions for what kind of practices I could do and also things I hadn't thought about like giving them a cue, 'In a minute I will ask you to', rather than just sitting there going, 'right, turn left now', so it's given me a bit of confidence. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*Now they're more confident with me being in the car so all the worry and stuff when I first started to drive has gone because they were worried I wasn't doing it right but I've got more confident and we've got the book so they actually trust my judgement now. They trust me now that I'm doing it right. (Learner driver focus group)*

*I don't know if the Pack has any direct effect on their learning but the fact that we feel more confident in taking them out and doing things with them probably does. I think the Pack is as much for our benefit which in turn will give them benefit. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

#### **D8: Learner driver better prepared at point of test and more likely to be test 'ready' on first attempt**

As the period covered by the evaluation was at the very early stages of use, not enough learners reached the point of test to be able to report on this within the timeframe.

### **D9: Learner driver has greater understanding of, and more compliant attitude towards, rules of the road**

The questionnaires included pre- and post- questions on learners' self-reported attitudes towards road rules. Again, due to the low numbers of learners at the stage of completing the post- surveys (10 weeks after Resource Pack use began), data on this is not available.

### **D10: Learner driver better prepared for solo driving and has positive attitude towards continuous driver development**

This was not measured within the process evaluation. Learners in the focus groups were in the early to middle stages of their learning and were not then ready for test.

## **5.9 Short Term Outcomes**

### **Short-term Outcomes: E1(1): YDCP drivers take up post-test initiatives**

A desired short-term outcome of the Resource Pack was that learners would go on to take post-test driving courses. Although the evaluation was not long enough to measure any hard outcomes for this there were some positive signs of intent with parents considering the post-test stage of their child's driving life:

*John [ADI] does encourage Pass Plus because you still can't really drive when you pass your test. Pass Plus was John's suggestion but I would have never even thought about it if it hadn't come from the book. We should do something more and that's what Sarah will do. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*Does this scheme end when they've passed their test or is there any back up? (Supervising drivers focus group)*

### **E1(2): Continued positive relationship with supervising driver re: driver development**

An early indication of how learners and supervisors may emerge with a positive on-going relationship around driver development was found in the admissions of parents of how their own driving knowledge had improved. Through using the Resource Pack parents had to learn and accept that their own knowledge and beliefs about driving might not be quite as satisfactory as they once thought.

*My Dad says stuff like 'you're doing that wrong' and I'll be like 'no I'm not this is how I've been taught', so in a way I'm teaching him as much as he's teaching me. (Learner drivers focus group)*

*Even when she's out with us as a passenger she's telling us what we should do so there's a parallel thing going on here. I pulled up outside friends the other day and reversed around the corner and she said, 'Mum you've only got to be a drain away from it, remember we saw it in the book'. (Learner drivers focus group)*

*When you've not supervised anyone before it's a bit of an eye-opener because it's so different nowadays to what it was before so it's a bit of a learning curve for us as well as the people who are learning to drive. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*I've actually learned things that I didn't know myself and quite a lot of things as well, I didn't even know the speed limit, well, I thought I did. I thought if you were on the motorway for example and you were towing something that you couldn't go over 50 and I was wrong. Now if I hadn't been doing this with Sarah, I wouldn't have known that. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*I also think that not only is she learning but I'm learning as well at the same time. She's coming up with bits of information and I'm thinking, 'you're actually right!' (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*It's even improved my own driving, there's a load of things I didn't realise and that I didn't know. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*I know now that if it hadn't been for the book I would have been doing things wrong and telling her the wrong thing. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

These comments by parents and learners serve to endorse the need for supervising drivers to receive reliable information on current teaching methods as well as Highway Code refreshers.

**E1(3): Novice drivers have good attitude towards and appreciation of, the importance of road rules and limits**

As this outcome refers to the post-test period it was not within the remit of the process evaluation. Questionnaire data would have provided an indicator of drivers' attitudes but as explained in D9 this data was not available.

**5.10 Long Term Outcomes**

**E2: Long-term Outcomes**

Long term outcomes were outwith the remit of the process evaluation.

## 6. CONTENT AND LAYOUT OF THE RESOURCE PACK MATERIALS

The Resource Pack materials were thought by all to be thorough yet clearly written and easy to use. The information guide and record book were considered “professional” and “well put together”. As reported earlier in the findings, the depth of the supervising driver’s information guide and the overall perceived demands of the Resource Pack had an unintended deterrence effect on some families invited to take part. Those parents who joined the scheme, however, and took the first step of opening the information guide (the larger book) and reading the content, realised that it was an easy read:

*When I first saw the actual book itself I thought, ‘oh crikey’, to be quite honest with you and then when you get to actually look through it it’s in clear detail, and it’s very, very good. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*The book wasn’t too long it was ok, it wasn’t like you were reading pages and pages. You just looked up that particular page for whatever you were doing and read it. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*It is very clear-cut, easy to understand and follow. It’s not a great big massive tome that you have to wade through, you can just pick bits out that you want. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

There were only minor suggestions for how the materials could be improved. These suggestions related to the layout and an over-reliance on text. The use of diagrams in the information guide would have made the material more inclusive as some readers preferred visual aids:

*I think some of it is a bit technical. There is a page that talks about cars passing on the near side or the off side. I always have difficulty grasping those concepts so I think perhaps they need explaining in a different way? A diagram would make that clearer. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*I like the information in the book, the advice on how you approach things but I’d like more bullet pointed instructions because there is quite a lot to digest. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

ADI comments on the layout of the topics in the information guide allude to, again, a lack of clarity on how exactly the materials should be used. ADI’s believed that the order of topics in the supervising driver’s information guide inferred the order in which those topics ought to be covered. The order of the topics in the information guide did not match the order in which the ADI’s taught and this created a level of confusion:

*I do like the questions in them and the way it is generally set out but I don’t feel that it is in a particularly good order. For example the pre-vehicle checks, a lot of that is in the show me tell me questions so I wouldn’t do that in the first lesson before we do moving off and stopping. (ADI focus group)*

*Dealing with junctions right at the end well you can’t get anywhere without dealing with junctions! Perhaps if anything put all the manoeuvres together in one bit at the end but you can’t get to a road to do a manoeuvre unless you’ve gone past a junction. (ADI focus group)*

*A parent looks at it and goes ‘oh you’ve not done the very first thing’. If it was done in an order that would normally be taught I think that would be far more logical and easy to follow for everybody. (ADI focus group 2)*

Besides asking for the page numbers of the information guide to be moved to the right-hand side of the page for easier reference there was only one other layout issue which was a lack of space in the drivers' record book. The comment boxes in the record book for ADI's and supervisors to fill in were too small for regular use and for comment on more than one practice drive. Likewise the 'private practice session record table' at the back of the record book did not leave enough space for the comments:

*The book isn't big enough because there isn't enough room to write in the back. I started grouping the sessions together to comment on, I could have put in another piece of paper couldn't I but it needs to be a lot bigger so I can put my comments down better. (Supervising driver focus group)*

ADI's identified two areas of content accuracy that they recommend be amended. The first was technical accuracy on the consistency in printing the term 'Mirrors, Signal, Manoeuvre' instead of 'Mirror, Signal, Manoeuvre'.

*There is one glaring anomaly, MSM. In some of the literature it's Mirror Signal Manoeuvre and in others it's Mirrors, Signal, Manoeuvre which is what it should be. I read through it when I first saw it and you hammer that in to your pupils and all of a sudden you come across, Mirror, and it discredits it a bit but apart from that it looks fine. (ADI focus group)*

The second issue was a debate about reality versus technical accuracy regarding the '3 basic elements of instruction' on page 8 of the supervising driver's information guide. All ADI's agreed that the book gives the technically correct method but that the method actually used by both instructors and examiners is different. This meant that ADI's were telling pupils and parents to ignore those pages of advice and that they would be using a different method. ADI's were concerned that this discrepancy could make learners and supervisors doubt the credibility of the Resource Pack materials.

*I actually sat in on a test just to check my understanding of things because we've got the alert, direct, identify when we're giving directions and it recommends that you always alert first, 'I'd like you to', for instance at the start, and I don't do that and I thought I'm sure examiners don't do that so I actually sat in on a test and they never give any prompt, they will simply say, 'at the end of the road turn left'. (ADI focus group)*

*That's what they tell you to do when you're learning to become a driving instructor but the examiner's wouldn't say 'I would like you to', they'd say, 'At the end of the road', or, 'At the roundabout'. (ADI focus group)*



## 7. UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

### 7.1 Perceived Threat to ADI Business

It was the intention of the Resource Pack to increase the structured on-road driving experience of young learner drivers by encouraging private practice in line with formal instruction. It was also hoped that more learner drivers would be 'test ready' when first presenting for test. The programme designers did not intend for private supervision to replace formal professional learning. From the outset of the Resource Pack though there were concerns aired by ADI's that in promoting the resource they would be losing paid business. ADI's feared that by increasing the amount of private supervision, learners would opt to reduce the number of paid professional lessons they take. The fear was that the Resource Pack would be used as a substitute instructor.

In one of the telephone conversations, an ADI gave an update on progress in gaining interested families and relayed an account of his most recent recruit to the Pack. The ADI told how the parent had phoned to cancel further lessons, offering the reason; 'Thank you very much but I think with what you have given me I will be alright.' One of the ADI's in the focus groups also reported a similar finding:

*The first one worked like a dream and that one has worked very well apart from the fact it has drastically reduced the number of lessons that they are doing with me now so from a business point of view it's a bit of a disaster but from the driving point of view it's working fine. (ADI focus group)*

It is not known why the focus group ADI's family reduced their lessons, it may have been a purely economic decision in keeping with reports from other ADI's of reduced business and learners struggling to afford lessons. It must be stated that the ADI did not know if their reason for reducing lessons was in any way associated with the Resource Pack, but his perception was that it had. This is potentially problematic as it may be a concern shared by other ADI's, thus affecting recruitment to the scheme.

Due to awareness of these early concerns the parents in the focus groups were directly asked if they thought the Resource Pack could result in learners taking fewer lessons. None of the sample of parents who participated in the focus group considered that this could be a likely consequence and firmly believed private practice to be in addition to professional instruction, undertaken for its own merit:

*It is to give them confidence to go out on their own, take them out in different situations. The driving instructor may not have the opportunity to take them out in those situations so it's confidence on the road, road practice. That needs to come from us. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

*I just think that practice makes perfect. (Supervising drivers focus group)*

However, the focus group learners were also asked this question and one respondent gave a contrary opinion:

*Interviewer: Do you think it would cut down the amount of lessons you have?*

*LD: Yes a bit*

*Interviewer: Is that a good thing?*

*LD: Yeah I think it is*

Although none of the other learners in the focus group voiced agreement with this opinion it is enough, along with the ADI reports, to raise the matter of reduced lessons as a serious

concern to be monitored and addressed. There is, furthermore, the wider issue of young people's belief that „quicker is better' as evidenced by the above quote.

## **8. DISCUSSION**

### **8.1 Acceptability**

The over-riding feedback from participants at all stages of the evaluation was that the concept of the YDCP Resource Pack was extremely well accepted. There were no strongly held negative beliefs about the initiative and even learners, supervisors and ADI's who did not participate could see the potential value of the scheme.

Future evaluation work could focus on the families who opt not to participate in order to learn more about what might encourage them to do so. The general goodwill towards the principles of the programme suggests that there is a perceived need amongst all parties for such a resource. Recruitment of families and ADI's would therefore benefit from being more active, for example a follow up phone call or letter to ADI's telling them more about the scheme or a repeat open evening inviting those using the Resource Pack to speak to others.

### **8.2 Parent-ADI-Learner Communication**

The initial explanation of the Resource Pack to clients by ADI's was a critical element in engaging parents and learners. The results showed that signing up to the resource was heavily parent lead and that interested learners would not sign up without the support of an interested parent. ADI's found it easier to recruit when their working practices included speaking to the parents directly and visiting the families in their homes. When the Resource Pack was only explained to learners in more of a two- rather than three-way relationship recruitment was not as successful nor was actual use of the resource as well monitored. Such personal contact with the families required additional time commitments from the ADI's but this is time that was recouped through parents providing private practice complementing paid lessons instead of clashing with them.

### **8.3 Lesson Sit-Ins**

The lesson sit-in was successful, as predicted by the programme designers, in helping parents understand how their learner was being taught and in helping learners show their parents the progress they were making. The unexpected success of the sit-in, however, was its beneficial role in Resource Pack recruitment. The sit-in provided a channel of communication and was an ideal situation for ADI's to explain the Resource Pack to both learners and parents at the same time. The sit-in was also a stage where parents had already invested a degree of involvement greater than booking and paying for the lessons. However, if the introduction of the Resource Pack is tied to sit-ins, then the sit-ins need to start in the early stage of learning. The timing of introducing the Resource Pack was shown to be important with ADI's recommending introduction as learners first begin taking lessons. At this stage learners and supervisors are not already settled into a routine so the resource can merge smoothly into being simply the way that learning is done.

### **8.4 The Need for an Introductory Leaflet**

Learner and parent respondents felt that the Resource Pack could have been explained better with clearer instructions about how to use the materials and clearer expectations about the responsibilities of each party and the time commitments required. Clearer explanation on the time commitments would alleviate concerns by parents and learners that the resource is too consuming and intensive. Recognising the busy lives of parents and the predominant focus on passing the test by learners (all issues which contribute towards non-recruitment) an explanatory leaflet would be less discouraging than being given a visually dense book to read. A single sheet explanatory leaflet would help to phase in the full Resource Pack materials.

## **8.5 Scheme Intensity**

Parents, on the whole, were not expecting the scheme or to be involved beyond their traditional role of arranging lessons nor were learners expecting anything beyond taking those lessons. Therefore as the Resource Pack asks for more than families anticipate, simpler more compact materials might result in increased interest and in increased use. One suggestion would be to dilute the scheme, reserving the full supervisor's information guide for those who want to use it, but offering all eligible families some form of reference material to help improve their private practice and aid understanding of the learning to drive process. Whilst this effort to increase actual use would sacrifice the integrity of the Resource Pack, use by more families could serve a greater contribution to the overall aim of safer young drivers.

Additional simpler materials would make the Resource Pack more flexible in how it can be used and also to whom it would appeal; making it a more inclusive product. The results show that a structured resource is feasible but it needs to be flexible in order to reach more than a very select group of young learner drivers.

## **8.6 Structuring Private Practice**

Keskinen (2007) spoke of the need to understand more about how supervising drivers teach. Whilst it was not part of the evaluation to study this specifically the findings have revealed that supervisors rarely plan practice sessions but offer to supervise their learners on more of a convenience basis such as running to the shops. Ericsson (2006) declared that expert skill acquisition requires deliberate practice therefore for well-structured pre-planned practice to be a realistic aim of the Resource Pack parents will require more explicit communication on how to use the materials for the greatest benefit.

## **8.7 Maintaining Learner Buy-in**

Caution though needs to be expressed regarding the significance of engaging parents in recruitment. Learners in the focus groups reported that they agreed with their parents about whether or not to take part. This has potential negative implications for the level of buy-in from learners. Although the short-term aim of the Resource Pack is to improve the quality and quantity of private practice, a longer term aim is that learners will have more positive and accepting attitudes towards road rules. Therefore, care needs to be taken to ensure that learners still take the figurative front seat and that they do not regard the Resource Pack as just „something for the parents’. This relates to the messages given out by ADI's when first introducing the resource to learners. Learners will be quick to pick up on any subtle message that the Resource Pack helps them pass their test quicker. Whilst passing the learner test and safe driving are not mutually exclusive, the intended outcome is that learners will be *test-ready* at first attempt and not that they will take their test sooner. The intended desire is also for learners to understand how learning continues even after they have gained their license and that passing their test need not be the end of their formal learning.

## **8.8. Basing Publicity on Parent and Learner Motivations**

In pushing test *readiness* ADI's can utilise the economy motive that young learners have in wanting to pass their test first time. ADI's can also utilise the economy motive in using the Resource Pack as a unique selling point. The resource gives parents a greater idea of how and why their learners are progressing which would reduce their suspicions, as reported by Christmas (2008), of ADI's suggesting more lessons than are needed. The resource can also act as a unique selling point in its appeal to parents' safety motives as the signed up YDCP ADI is shown to be outwardly interested in more than just earning money. These motives of safety and economy can be addressed in future publicity for the scheme.

The economy motive of both learners and parents has strong implications for the desired short-term outcome of taking up pass plus or other post-test initiatives. Given the reports of learners paying for either a car or lessons, it can be predicted that there will be reluctance to pay for post-test driving courses unless there is a tangible financial incentive to do so.

### **8.9 Future Monitoring and Evaluation Concerns**

If further evaluation of the YDCP Resource Pack is to be done the advice would be to minimise the amount of paper work involved and to have a clear system for ADI's to feedback details centrally of Resource Pack participants.

## 9. SUMMARY

The evaluation set out to answer four key research questions. These were:

- To what extent does the Resource Pack encourage supervisors to take an active role in the supervision of a learning driver and what were the perceived reasons for this?

The Resource Pack was recognised as addressing a known issue – the gap in communication between ADI's, learners *and* parents. The greatest challenge for the programme was in supervisors and learners appreciating that there is more to learning to drive than simply passing the learner test. Passing the learner test is the only legal requirement that young drivers have to comply with so encouraging families to do more than is necessary was always going to be a significant task. Those families who did want to get involved and who could do so were asked, through signing up to the Resource Pack, to change their informal adhoc practice into informal structured practice. They were asked to keep written records of their practice and to be active in ensuring the driver's record book was regularly passed between all three members of the learning team.

There was a scale of engagement from families who only referred to the materials immediately before the test to those families who followed the Resource Pack with full commitment and who used all the materials with integrity. Regardless of the extent to which families engaged with the Resource Pack both learners and supervisors gained positively from the experience.

Whilst the Resource Pack was successful in benefitting families who were open to the idea of private practice there was a core group of parents who did not see a need to be directly involved in teaching their children to drive or who did not feel comfortable in doing so. To change the attitudes of this group of parents would require more than a practical resource aimed at improving practice sessions.

Publicity for the Resource Pack needs to include messages on why parents ought to be involved, how the resource will support them, and the benefits to themselves and their learners. This will involve a challenge to the assumption that professional lessons and passing the learner test are sufficient in and of themselves for their children to be safe on the roads. Gaining supervised experience in a wide range of conditions as well as garnering safety positive attitudes is an important role for parents but this role is currently underestimated.

The motives for parents engaging with the scheme were safety and economy. The parents who took part were actively seeking instructors who could satisfy these motives and who offered some assurance that they were giving their child the best chance to be safe as they became young drivers. These motives may therefore be the hook to entice families who did not think they needed the Resource Pack or any other scheme.

- How did members of the learning team view the introduction of the Resource Pack into the various relationships which formed part of the teaching and learning experience?

The undeniable success of the Resource Pack was its use as a reference point for resolving conflicts between supervisors and learners and therefore between supervisors and ADI's. The Resource Pack, and particularly the encouragement of lesson sit-ins, also opened up accessible communication channels between parents and ADI's who might not have otherwise had much contact beyond a friendly wave. The supervising drivers' information guide provided a non-confrontational check on the parents' knowledge of the Highway Code and on their awareness of modern day teaching methods. Through this guidance questions could be easily raised and learners did not have to worry about whose advice they should follow when driving during private practice. The information guide served as a reference book for when parents were unsure of what their young learner was telling them or doing.

The drivers' record book helped parents to follow their learners' progress and helped all parties to remember what had been covered.

There is a concern that parents and learners will see the Resource Pack as a way of reducing the number of professional lessons they need. This must be addressed in how the programme is explained and again, publicity of the safety and monetary benefits (not losing money by taking the test before the learner is ready for instance) is one way of achieving this.

- How successfully were the support opportunities offered by Staffordshire County Council utilised by parents, young drivers, and ADIs?

All signed up YDCP Resource Pack ADI's were aware of the helpline and of support from Staffordshire County Council. Parents also spoke to the County Council to find out more about the scheme after they had seen the publicity. Young drivers did not tend to contact the Council, supporting the finding that they followed their parents lead in signing up. Thus advertising should also relate to the benefits the young drivers themselves could receive in order to build their ownership of their own involvement. Even though the helpline and support was known about it was not always utilised by ADI's who harboured queries. Therefore regular email contact would be recommended so that ADI's are prompted to ask any questions they may have. Telephone contact would be preferable but given the nature of driving instructors' work this is not always possible during regular working hours.

- How appropriate were the contents, style and requirements of the Resource Pack perceived as being for achieving its stated aims?

For achieving its stated aims of structured and beneficial private practice the contents and style of the Resource Pack were perceived as being very appropriate with minor amendments such as the size of the comments boxes and inclusion of diagrams. The layout and professionalism of the books were highly regarded.

Unfortunately as highly structured practice is the exception rather than the rule in parent supervision the requirements and style of the materials was, at this stage, over-ambitious.

To engage parents and learners who were put off from the depth of the perceived requirements it is suggested that simpler materials may help overcome the initial interest barrier whilst still providing helpful advice. These simpler materials would provide a taster of the content of the Resource Pack and could lead to families taking their interest further and onto using the fully co-ordinated system of driver's record book and supervisor's information guide. A leaflet explaining the Resource Pack would also help ADI's better publicise and explain the scheme to potential families at the first point of interest or contact.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Publicity should focus on parent attitudes and concerns regarding supervising their learner drivers**
- **Publicity should clearly explain how parents and learners are expected to engage with the Resource Pack**
- **Publicity should focus on the benefits of both private practice and of the Resource Pack materials, to include testimonials**
- **ADI's should receive clear instructions on how they should ideally use the Resource Pack materials**
- **The Supervising driver's information guide to contain some information in bullet-points and to use diagrams where appropriate**
- **For Mirror Signal Manoeuvre references to be corrected to Mirrorsu Signal Manoeuvre**
- **For page numbers to be moved to the right hand side of the page in the Supervising driver's information guide**
- **For more space to be made available for comments on practice sessions in the drivers' record book**
- **To check on the instructions on page 8 for Alert Direct Identify, in light of comments that the instructions contradict accepted professional practice**
- **Best practice for ADI's to engage families involves direct contact with parents when introducing the Resource Pack. Parents should also be followed up by ADI's after this initial contact to ensure that record books are being used by all parties and that the supervising driver's information guide is being referred to**
- **At-a-glance materials giving information and guidance points to parents should be available for those deterred (at least initially) by the perceived requirements of the resource. There should be the option of using the fuller materials once families are engaged with the programme**
- **The provision of simpler materials could also be used by parents who do not practically supervise but who wish to understand their child's learning. They could also be used by supervisors of older drivers**
- **An explanatory leaflet handed out by ADI's would save giving out the Resource Pack for families to look at before actually signing up thus materials would not be given out unnecessarily. When first seeing the materials the families will have a better idea of what is involved**
- **Lesson sit-ins to remain a programme component and to be actively encouraged**
- **Database of participating learners and supervisors to be maintained for further evaluation**



## **11. APPENDIX ONE: SUPPORTING LITERATURE**

### **11.1 Underlying Principles**

The underlying principles of the Staffordshire Young Driver Coaching Programme (YDCP) Resource Pack are to increase the effectiveness of private practice in conjunction with professional instruction, and to involve parents in the learning to drive process. These principles are supported by findings from international research on road safety, learning to drive, and adolescent development.

### **11.2 Current UK Learner Training and Testing Developments**

In May 2008 the Driving Standards Agency released a public consultation on 'Learning to Drive'. The consultation set out issues which the DSA intended to address to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system.

The issues covered were: increasing the numbers of learners taking post-test driving courses; improving the communication between learner, ADI and supervisor; helping the learner plan, monitor and record their progress; increasing the 'test-readiness' of candidates; and, increasing the variety of practical driving experience.

The DSA report on the consultation responses was published in April 2009 and is available at [www.dsa.gov.uk](http://www.dsa.gov.uk): The report revealed strong support for the involvement of parents in the learning to drive process - including raising awareness of their own driving behaviour. The report also introduced the trial of a new learner workbook to record and review progress as an aid to better structured training.

The YDCP Resource Pack incorporates the same aims as the DSA in their proposals for more effective learning. The evaluation of the resource pack therefore provides valuable practice-based information for the government's proposed pilot of the new learning to drive syllabus.

### **11.3 The Importance of Parents**

Keating (2008:275) stated that next to graduated licensing, parents were a "critical factor" in reducing unsafe driving by teenagers: "Parental monitoring, involvement and expectations remain key to reducing teen risky behaviour, including driving".

Keating explained that parents are often implicitly involved in their children's driving by providing access to a car, or by financing lessons or motor insurance. Beck et al (2002) describes parents as, "...the principal gatekeepers for driving privileges." This central role in their children's early driving years affords parents a critical opportunity to influence safety positive behaviours. Goodwin et al (2006:225) summarised the significance of this influence: "Young-driver experts are in substantial agreement that more effective parental involvement in supervising and managing teenage drivers is one of the most promising avenues for further lowering young-driver crashes, injuries and fatalities."

The effects of parental involvement on post-licence driving risk were shown to be statistically significant by Hartos et al (2000:362) in a survey of 300 newly qualified young drivers in North America. The survey showed that, "higher levels of parental monitoring were related to fewer risky driving behaviours". Hartos' study found that parental monitoring and restrictions reduced the incidence of both traffic law violations and road crashes.

“As parents provide specific and clear guidelines, adolescents may learn appropriate behaviour and responsibility for their actions. Adolescents who know their behavioural expectations may be more responsible in their learning to drive and in their driving as they get older”. (Hartos et al: 2000:362)

A separate American study of over 5500 secondary school students also found significant links between parenting styles and teenage driver crash risk. The self-report study included questions on attitudes such as driving under the influence of drink or drugs, as well as on actual driving behaviours, and personal crash history. The authors concluded that: “Parental rules and monitoring are key determinants of safe teen driving behaviours and attitudes. When rules and monitoring are accompanied by parental support, the benefit is amplified and is most consistently protective...Our data affirm that engaged parents, in contrast to uninvolved parents, were protective to youths in the domain of safe driving” (Ginsburg et al:2009:1045).

In a presentation made to a workshop on supervised driving, organised by the international commission for driver testing authorities, Professor Keskinen (2007) spoke of the shortage of evaluation studies on the effectiveness of supervised training in reducing accidents when fully licensed. He discussed the need to discover more about the relationship between the learner driver and the supervising driver, and about how the supervising driver teaches. Keskinen believes that only by understanding this phenomenon can the supervising driver best be supported and the effectiveness of private practice increased. The YDCP Resource Pack is one of a scarce number of evaluated interventions which targets the supervising driver and specifically, their relationship with the learner driver.

#### **11.4 The Importance of Private Practice**

Christie (2001) reviewed the effectiveness of conventional driver training and reported no strong evidence supporting skill training as a reliable predictor of safe post-test driving. Christie did, however, conclude that the approach with the greatest capacity to influence driver behaviour was increased pre-licence experience: “The accumulation of an on-road experience bank is perhaps the major potential contributor to reduced crash risk in solo driving for novice drivers”.

Private practice is one way in which the diversity and extent of this experience bank can be widened. Christie further noted that this build up of diverse on-road experience would entail co-operation between the supervisor, learner and professional instructor.

An OECD report on young drivers provides research-based recommendations for policy makers on how to reduce the crash risk of under 25 year olds. On supervised driving the report states, “...post-licensing driving risks would be greatly reduced if all learner drivers were to acquire much higher levels of pre-licensing driving experience, making informal training one of the most potentially effective countermeasures”, (OECD:2006:132).

The OECD does not recommend supervised driving without qualification though; they recommend that supervision be an addition to formal instruction, not in lieu of it, and they refer to the need for supervision to be informal but informed:

“A potential improvement to accompanied driving might be to support parents and others in the role of supervisor and to deepen their understanding of effective supervision. Those accompanying the learner must be prepared to provide appropriate direction and influences”, (OECD: 2006:134).

The importance of the learner phase in forming driver attitudes and behaviours is further supported by Christmas (2008) in qualitative research with groups of learners, parents and ADI's. Young learners' willingness to take criticism, and their impatience to pass the test and drive without restriction were recorded as fundamental to how „well' they learn. Christmas' participants reported that parents were not equipped as effective or constructive supervisors due to their outdated driving knowledge and the nature of the parent-child relationship compared to the instructor-learner relationship.

From the parent workshops Christmas found that parents desired greater communication with ADI's and that they could be suspicious of ADI's motives in continuing to recommend lessons over the test. Moreover, parents described a need for guidance and support in supervising their children as learners, and then in monitoring them as fully licensed drivers. Christmas concluded that providing parents with this guidance was one of three, „important opportunities' for improving road safety:

“We are in no way suggesting that we „blame the parents' here, but, undoubtedly, there is an opportunity to help parents think about the role they might play in preparing their children to be safe drivers. Any such efforts might also build on the existing appetite of at least some parents for more guidance and support during the learning process... – and after the test...” (Christmas: 2008:69)

In a critical view, Simons-Morton (2007) states that, although vital, the benefit of pre-licence practice is „inherently limited' because the controlled environment of the learning period does not relate to the young drivers' experience when solo-driving. However Simons-Morton, as with Keskinen, points to the dearth of evaluation studies on supervised practice and highlights the lack of structured support available for supervisors:

“Moreover, there are no clear guidelines on how parents should teach their teens, it is unclear how capable parents are at teaching driving skills and what types and amounts of supervised practice novices should have” (Simons-Morton: 2007:8).

The value of private practice has been widely accepted but so too has the associated concern over how and what supervising drivers are teaching, (Gregersen, 1994). Keating and Halpern-Felsher (2008) defer to the literature on the development of expertise to suggest how supervised practice driving can be augmented. Ericsson (2006) explains how acquiring expert skill requires more than just a *quantity* of practice (for instance a minimum number of hours). To achieve greater proficiency the practice must be deliberately designed, sustained and afforded concentrated effort.

The need for supervised practice was confirmed by Groeger (2001: 6) in a three year longitudinal study of 180 UK learner drivers. Groeger describes the acquisition of driving skill as a “power function” of driving experience, “...the more experience a pupil has had, the fewer errors they commit per mile”. As Keating and Halpern-Felsher showed, however, it is the *nature* of the driving experience, as much as the amount, which affects the competence of the learner. Groeger observed that learners taught informally by their parents experienced a wider variety of driving situations and received more instruction about consideration of other road users, than did those taught by professional instructors.

### **11.5 The Importance of Partnership**

Groeger and Brady (2004) contend that deliberately co-ordinating professional instruction with private practice offers learners the most tailored and relevant method of learning to drive.

“The main implication of the present research is that increasing time behind the wheel, and increasing the variety of conditions under which this experience is amassed, would greatly

enhance the acquisition, retention and transfer of L-drivers' skills. Both professional instruction and non-professional tuition have a crucial role to play in bringing this about". (Groeger: 2004:8)

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