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Lockdown easing triggers boom in new drivers learning with school of mum and dad

The gradual easing of the coronavirus lockdown has seen more new drivers than ever opting to learn with another family member, analysis of RAC Learner Driver Insurance data suggests.

With driving instructors unable to start giving tuition again until 4 July as a result of the pandemic, figures show just how eager new drivers were to get behind the wheel with RAC Insurance recording its highest-ever weekly

demand for learner driver insurance during the first week of June – up on the same week last year marginally, and a significant 37% up on 2018.

And despite driving schools now back in operation the desire to take lessons from a family member shows no signs of abating, perhaps in part fuelled by a long backlog of students wanting to learn to drive with an instructor.

The average number of learner driver policies bought each week through June and the first half of this month is up 27.5% on pre-lockdown levels and is also higher than the RAC would expect to see at this time of year, up 6% on the same period in 2019.

The figures also reveal provisional drivers are now opting for longer policies of 36 days, up from an average of 30 days over the same period last year* – suggesting those starting out on their driving careers are keen to make up for time lost earlier in the lockdown when they were unable to learn to drive.

Separate RAC research conducted earlier in the lockdown showed that a third of drivers aged 17 to 34 felt having access to a car was more important than ever during the pandemic. The ongoing message from national and local governments for people to avoid public transport up until now could also have had the effect of accelerating new drivers' interest in having lessons, and passing their test to give them the freedom they need.

RAC Insurance spokesperson Simon Williams said:

“As lockdown began to be eased but learning to drive with an instructor still wasn't possible, we saw demand for our learner driver insurance grow as this was the only way new drivers could continue to get experience on the roads at the start of their driving careers. The fact we have seen demand for policies hit an all-time high is remarkable, given just what an abnormal year 2020 has been so far.

“But interestingly, while driving schools have been allowed to reopen since 4 July, our figures show there's still strong demand for lessons from mum and dad, perhaps driven by fears over sharing a vehicle with somebody else – or perhaps because professional instructors are being inundated with requests for lessons and are struggling to cope with demand.

“The impact of the coronavirus on people’s travel habits has thrown into sharp focus the essential role the car plays in allowing us to get about, whether that is to do a weekly shop at a local supermarket or travel further afield to see family and friends. We know dependency on the car was already increasing before the pandemic,** and for young people having access to a car can literally be a lifeline to getting out and about, whether that’s for work or pleasure.

“So it’s understandable that so many new drivers are desperate to build their experience and confidence sat next to a family member they can trust, and then get on with taking their test. The backlog of driving tests built up since the country went into lockdown might mean they are having to wait longer than they’d like for one, but while frustrating provisional drivers can use this time to get in some extra experience on the roads.

“Learner driver insurance can offer a convenient, good value and flexible means of giving those starting on their driving careers peace of mind when behind the wheel.”

The RAC has published a guide on teaching a learner driver which can be found [here](#).

What is learner driver insurance?

Traditionally, provisional drivers were added to their parents or other family members’ policies so they could practise their driving after a few lessons with an instructor, but now a provisional driver can take out their own, short-term policy to cover any period from a few hours to several months. This type of insurance is ideal for getting more experience under the belt before taking the test and can be more cost-effective than being a named driver on another driver’s policy. It also doesn’t affect the main driver’s no-claims discounts on their own policy.

Go online to find out more about RAC Learner Driver Insurance.

Notes to Editors

* On average, new drivers also opted for policies of 30 days in length through 2019 and before the coronavirus lockdown was introduced on 23 March 2020.

** www.rac.co.uk/drive/features/rising-car-dependency-2019/

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About the RAC

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 12m UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. Its services include:

- **[Breakdown assistance](#)**. Its highly-skilled, 1,600-strong branded patrol workforce attends more than two million breakdowns every year, fixing on average four out of five vehicles at the roadside. The RAC's patrol fleet is one of the most advanced in the UK, and was the first to roll out both an [All-Wheels-Up recovery system](#), allowing the vast majority of vehicles to be recovered from a single patrol van, and [EV Boost](#) mobile electric vehicle charging units
- **[Insurance](#)**. The RAC is a top-five [car insurance](#) broker having surpassed the 500,000 policies-in-force milestone in 2018. It also offers ['black box' telematics policies](#), as well as home and travel insurance
- **[Other motoring services](#)**. The RAC leads in the development of new solutions for business, fleets, electric vehicles and future car technology. Its additional products and services include a [personal loans offering](#), a [used car buying website](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#). It also has a network of [Approved Dealers](#) and [Approved Garages](#) which combine the trust of RAC brand with local service and convenience

The RAC also works to support the interests of its members and UK drivers on the most important motoring issues which it identifies via the annual [RAC Report on Motoring](#) and the [RAC Opinion Panel](#). The Report on Motoring is the longest running analysis of driver opinion in the UK having been published every year since 1989.

For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).