

YOUNG DRIVERS DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION BY PASSENGERS

- MORE TH>N teams up with reality TV star Joey Essex to promote safe passenger behaviour and driving among young people
- MORE TH>N SM>RT WHEELS reveals that a third (35%) of drivers aged 18-25 admit passengers are driving them to distraction
- “It’s bang out of order to distract the driver when they’re trying to concentrate on the road”, says Joey

For young drivers, mastering manoeuvres, swotting up on the Highway Code and practicing for the hazard perception test is all part of the course when trying to get your driving licence. But the best young drivers also consider the friends and passengers they’ll have in the car when they finally ditch the ‘L’ plates.

In fact, MORE TH>N SM>RT WHEELS carried out consumer research¹ with 18-25-year-old driving licence holders which revealed that over a third (35%) say their friends are distracting passengers, with more than half (62%) agreeing that the more passengers in the car, the more distracting it is when driving. 85% of the young drivers surveyed agree that distracting passengers are more likely to cause an accident.

To encourage young drivers to think about their behaviour as passengers, Essex funny man, Joey Essex is leading MORE TH>N’s campaign to celebrate young drivers who show positive behaviours and promote safety to passengers. The reality TV star, who passed his driving test fourth time, says, ‘Don’t get me wrong, going on a road trip with mates is always fun, but it’s bang out of order to distract the driver when they’re trying to concentrate on the road. At the end of the day it’s everyone in the car who needs to act responsibly, the driver and every single passenger too.’

MORE TH>N and Joey want to start a conversation about what safe passenger behaviour looks like. Whether it’s updating the Highway Code with questions that

spell out the most dangerous and distracting behaviours passengers exhibit, or giving learners advice and information during their driving lessons, it's evident that more information and guidance on what safe passenger behaviour looks like would be valuable.

Though distracting behaviours might seem harmless at the time, for an unlucky 16% of young drivers, these distractions have resulted in a car crash of some sort. Over half (63%) of these incidents resulted in injury to the driver or the passenger, with the average repairs costing £542.

Young drivers say that when their friends are in the passenger seat, 18% encourage them to speed, and for the 14% who confess to bowing to this peer pressure and putting their foot to the floor, the average speed increase is 15 miles per hour.

If it's not speeding, passenger pals encourage young drivers to play music distractingly loud (23%), eat and drink at the wheel (19%), and even use their phone (5%) whilst on the move - an illegal offence that could land you six points and your licence revoked if you only passed in the last two years. Drivers aged 18-25 also admitted they check their phone for messages on average three times per journey when passengers are in the car.

Even though passengers can be distracting, a minority of young drivers are eager to impress their mates. 16% of drivers aged 18 to 25 say they often or always try to show off to their friends when driving, with 19% turning up the music, 10% saying they've taken their eyes off the road to talk to a friend and 6% admitting to overtaking in a dangerous spot at the request of a passenger. For 38% of new drivers, one type of passenger does make them drive more sensibly: their parents.

Gareth Davies, head of motor at MORE TH>N explains, 'The majority of young drivers drive well, and that's why we support them to get on the road with MORE TH>N Smart Wheels which uses a black box that sits in your car and monitors your

driving to help lower your insurance premiums. However, our research shows that it's not always the drivers who cause problems behind the wheel. Anything or anyone that takes a driver's eyes off the road or affects the driver's concentration, even if for a few seconds, is a huge hazard to both them and other road users. What friends and passengers deem fun at the time can have serious consequences, so we want to encourage passengers to have more awareness of their behaviours whilst in cars and to take more responsibility as passengers. That's why we're encouraging young people to think about the way they behave when they're in the car with friends and new drivers.'

- Ends -

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Notes to editors

1 A survey of 2,000 18-25 year old drivers by One Poll on behalf of MORE TH>N Car Insurance.

2 – A survey of 1,000 parents with children aged 18-25 who hold a driving licence by One Poll on behalf of MORE TH>N Car Insurance