

Cash Strapped Learners turning to Driving School of Mum and Dad



Released on: November 9, 2009, 9:52 am

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Industry: [Consumer Services](#)

- Over one in ten learner drivers (12%) taught solely by amateur instructors
- Further one in ten (13%) mix and match by taking lessons with a qualified driving instructor and family and friends
- 72% of learners being taught by amateurs cannot afford professional driving lessons
- 17% say learning to drive with a family member or friend is a 'bad experience' - they would not recommend it to other learners
- The downside of learning with family and friends: 'in-car' arguments (46%), picking up bad driving habits (27%) and finally feeling forced to take proper driving lessons with a qualified instructor anyway (46%)
- At risk: over a quarter of novices (27%) learning with family and friends are unsure whether their instructor checked their car insurance first - (7%) say that they definitely didn't.

Learner drivers are increasingly turning to amateur instructors to combat the costs of learning to drive, according to new research from uSwitch.com, the independent price comparison and switching service. Learning to drive with a qualified instructor now costs an average of GBP1,127, but over one in ten learner drivers (12%) are

avoiding this by being taught solely by family and friends, while a further 13% mix and match by combining amateur tuition with professional driving lessons.

Of those who have opted for the 'home-schooled' route, 72% say that the main reason for doing so was affordability - 62% cannot afford to pay for lessons themselves, while 10% admit that their parents cannot afford to pay either.

However while it appears to be cost effective, taking lessons with amateur instructors can turn into a dead end for learners. Almost one in five (17%) say that learning to drive with a member of their family or a friend was a bad experience and not to be recommended to others. The biggest concerns were 'in-car' arguments (46%) and picking up bad driving habits (27%). Worryingly, 18% of novices learning from a friend or relative even ended up having a 'bump' due to the vehicle's lack of dual control. Unsurprisingly then, 46% of learners who start off taking lessons from amateurs end up taking proper driving lessons with a qualified instructor anyway.

According to the research, learning from family or friends can result in behaviour that is far from conducive to learning and could even make novice drivers more nervous behind the wheel. Almost a quarter (22%) have been shouted or even sworn at by the relative or friend teaching them, 22% have also had the wheel grabbed by their teacher and 30% have had the unsettling experience of seeing their teacher stamping on an imaginary brake. Amateur instructors also don't seem to have the nerves or patience of their professional counterparts - 16% of novices have been evicted from the driving seat.

But learner drivers turning to family and friends for tuition aren't just risking failing a driving test. They also risk not being properly insured. Over a quarter of novices (27%) learning with amateurs are unsure whether the person teaching them checked their car insurance policy first. Incredibly, 7% say that their instructor definitely didn't check despite the fact that, when teaching a friend or relative to drive, the learner must at least be a named driver.

Adding a 17 year old with a provisional licence to your [car insurance](#) can cost an additional GBP1,360. This drops to an extra GBP331 if they are 21 and GBP48 if they are 25 years old. However, driving without insurance is a criminal offence, attracting a heavy fine and six penalty points.

Mark Monteiro, insurance expert at uSwitch.com, comments: "Learner drivers are increasingly seeking to keep costs down by relying on 'freebie' tuition from family and friends. This can be cost effective, but not always as straightforward as it seems. Taking a stressful situation and adding in arguments, bad behaviour and family friction can mean it becomes a nightmare for all involved. Amateur instructors are also likely to miss vital parts of the picture, such as making sure the learner is insured to drive the vehicle they are learning in - this could have serious and long lasting consequences for all involved.

"Learners need to ensure that the family member teaching them is at least 21 years old, holds a full licence and has held one for at least three years. The person teaching them must also ensure that the learner holds a provisional licence and is insured on the vehicle they are learning to drive in. Insurers will not pay out if an uninsured learner driver is involved in an accident, even if the relative teaching them is covered. Driving without insurance is also a criminal offence and can result in a heavy fine and six penalty points - a disastrous outcome for those simply trying to keep the cost of learning down."

[See the full version of this press release.](#)

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