

## **“I have a few questions...”**

It is very easy to be focused on things like price, offers, pass rates, or a flashy car or website.

Consider what you want from your future on the road. The following advice may help you find a suitable instructor:

### **Question 1 – How will you ensure I become a safe driver?**

In order to be a safe driver you need to be well equipped with a variety of skills, have the understanding and ability to use those skills properly and the wisdom to know when to use them. A good instructor will help by encouraging you to understand why you need to do what you do and the consequences of not doing it. Furthermore the instructor will be flexible enough to teach in a way that is most appropriate for you as an individual.

### **Question 2 – What experience will I get on my lessons?**

A good instructor will make sure that you are exposed to as many different roads, traffic situations, conditions and places as possible. Driving around the same area lesson after lesson may make you a geographical expert but it won't make you a safe driver. The more you experience during your lessons, the better equipped you will be for a lifetime of safe driving.

### **Question 3 – How will you record my progress?**

In order to measure your progress and set future goals an instructor will have some mechanism for recording what you do, providing you with a confidential record of where you are in the learning process and the progress that you are making. This is your record and you are free to share it with whomever you want.

### **Question 4 – Do you support private practice?**

This is the best way to learn: professional tuition with an ADI supported by private practice with a friend or family member. Many collisions involving new drivers are due to lack of experience so the more experience you can gain pre-test, the safer you will be post-test. Furthermore, consider getting whoever you are practicing with to come along on a lesson to see how you are being taught and learn how to help you the best. Maybe even get them to have a short assessment with the instructor so that they can give you a good example when they are driving.

### **Question 5 – Can you tell me about you as an instructor?**

- ✓ An approved driving instructor (ADI) is fully qualified and has passed the rigorous testing that all ADI's must go through. They have a GREEN badge.
- ✓ A Potential Driving Instructor (PDI) is part qualified and is still to pass the final qualifying exam. This does not mean that you shouldn't learn with them but you need to understand that they are a trainee, they probably shouldn't charge as much as an ADI and they may fail to reach the standard to pass their final exam and be unable to finish your training.
- ✓ If they are neither of the above, it is illegal for them to instruct and charge you for that instruction.
- ✓ Undergoing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) shows that the instructor is keen to keep their knowledge current. They will therefore be aware of changes in legislation, vehicle and driver technologies and instructional techniques.

**Important: Ask ALL these questions even if they do not apply or seem important to you. The answers will be revealing and help you to find the best instructor for you.**

## **Questions the instructor may ask you**

It is important that there should be some sort of rapport between you and the instructor and this will ideally start now. You've asked your questions, now hopefully the instructor will want to know something about you, your driving and your aims and goals. This shows that they are interested in YOU!

## Things you need to be aware of..

Once you have gone through the above and identified a suitable instructor you still need to check certain things.

- ✓ The instructor will have a badge which they should show to you either before or on the first lesson. If they are an ADI it will be GREEN; if they are a PDI it will be PINK. It must be on display during the lesson if he/she is charging you. Ensure you see it.
- ✓ Good communication is the key to successful learning and comes out of a good working relationship. If your previous communication with the instructor has been solely by text or email, it is worth chatting to the instructor directly, either over the phone or face to face. A good instructor will be willing to meet up or chat with you beforehand. You should take advantage of this.
- ✓ Do not pay for a large block of lessons until you are completely happy to do so. This may take a few lessons to decide but it is better to spend a little more up front than commit yourself to something which will cost you more in the long run. If a deal is being offered, make sure you entirely understand the terms and conditions before you sign up and pay and be aware of **exactly** what you are committing yourself to.
- ✓ Expect to pay between £20 and £30 per hour. There may be cheaper deals around but watch for dodgy terms and conditions and remember: You usually get what you pay for...!

## Danger Signs...

None of these should occur on your lessons, **without prior agreement**. Remember you are paying for the lesson and it should be conducted professionally at all times. If not, you need to discuss the issue with your instructor and ensure it is resolved to your satisfaction.

- ✗ The instructor is constantly late to lessons and/or does not give you the full duration of the lesson you are paying for. Bear in mind that you may not be driving for the whole lesson.
- ✗ The instructor runs personal errands, like going to the bank, picking up their children or going to the shops.
- ✗ The instructor cancels frequently or can't fit you in within a reasonable timeframe.
- ✗ The instructor uses his/her pupils to run a taxi service i.e., at the start of your lesson you drive the previous pupil back home and at the end of your lesson you drive to the next pupil's house and they drive you home. Furthermore the instructor should, within reason, be happy to pick you up and drop you off at your chosen location.
- ✗ The instructor does not apply his/her full attention to your driving at all times e.g., reading the paper, texting, talking on the phone, playing games or indulging in any other activity which you consider is diverting their attention. Most of these are actually illegal whilst supervising a learner.
- ✗ The instructor smokes in the car before, during or after your lesson. The car is deemed to be a workplace and as such it is illegal to smoke in it at any time. In this case, your agreement makes no difference – it is still illegal. E-cigs are, under current legislation, okay but this may change in the future.
- ✗ The instructor's behaviour or conduct falls below a standard that you consider reasonable. For example, being rude, swearing and making inappropriate comments, being racist or sexist. Poor personal hygiene is also below the standard expected.
- ✗ The instructor makes any inappropriate physical contact. Bear in mind that it may be necessary for the instructor to physically intervene on occasions but this should be very rare and should be satisfactorily explained. If you feel that the instructor has made contact with you in an inappropriate manner you should report them in the first case to the DVSA and, if sufficiently serious, to the police as well.

## In Conclusion

The instructor should make you feel comfortable at all times. Their attitude to you should be professional but friendly, business-like but personable. They should be able to identify the way that you learn best and be able to adapt their teaching style to suit. Generally speaking you should enjoy your lessons. You should not, on an ongoing basis, approach your lessons with a feeling of dread or fear. Good luck in your search for your instructor!