Driving Age

You are a single mum and you have three children. The eldest has just turned 15 and loves playing sport and being social. Having to take three children to different places all the time can be a bit of a hassle, but when you only have two children it makes life a lot easier. Letting the eldest take him or herself around is like taking a load off. The driving age should not be raised from 15.

A lot of teenagers are leaving school around 17 and 18 to attend university. How are they meant to get there if they only have their learners? They will need someone who is at least 22 (someone who has had their full for two years) to be in the car with them. Also, teenagers who live in rural areas who have to get into town almost every day for school would be dependant on their parents for longer. Buses would be a main alternative but buses don’t go out to isolated places in the country. 17 is just too old to be learning to drive.

On the other hand, teenagers do contribute to a majority of crashes on our roads. An article in teenage magazine Tearaway stated that teenagers make up only 7% of drivers but contributed to 14% of crashes in 2006. Dr Robert Isler stated that the frontal lobe of the brain has not fully developed until the age of 25. The frontal lobe controls judgement and self control which is needed when learning to drive.

An alternative to raising the driving age from 15 could be to extend the periods of time we have for each stage of our licence. The time period for a learner licence could be extended to twelve months rather than six months. This would mean that the minimum age a person could get their restricted and start driving solo would be sixteen. They would have greater knowledge of driving on busy roads. Also a defensive driving course could be compulsory on a restricted licence. This would help teens to learn about driving safely on the roads with other vehicles.

The driving age of 15 is fine where it is but the time periods could be extended and the tests could be made tougher. What we really need to put our attention onto is the quality of driving we allow on our roads.