A THINK! campaign on tyre safety

Goal 2

POSITION AS AT	VERSION	NEXT REVIEW
November 2026	1.0	After the 2027 Young Driver campaign and Tyre Safety Month

Our position

THINK! is the Government's road safety campaign, and its name carries authority with drivers. Vehicle condition is rarely part of its messaging. TyreSafe wants the Department for Transport to run a THINK! campaign on tyre safety. Until it does, we will keep working with the THINK! team to endorse TyreSafe's member-funded campaigns case by case, as it did for Young Driver.

The problem

- **Many drivers do not check their tyres.** Only 39% of drivers know the 1.6mm legal minimum tread depth, 19% check their tread monthly, and one driver in ten has never checked their tyres. (RAC/Online95, 2024; Anyline/TyreSafe/Opinium, 2024; TyreSafe/Opinium, 2026)
- **Many treat the MOT as a guarantee.** 87% of drivers assume a car that passes its MOT is safe. (National Highways, 2026)
- **Even a near miss rarely prompts a check.** 38% of drivers had a near miss in the past year, but only 11% of them then checked their tyres. (TyreSafe/Opinium, 2026)
- **Tyre-related casualties are rising.** 201 people were killed or seriously injured where defective tyres were a factor in 2025, 21% above the Strategy's baseline, against 3% for all casualties. (DfT)
- **Tyre safety lacks the Government's voice.** THINK! chooses its campaigns using casualty data, and on police-recorded casualty data (STATS19) tyres rank low. So tyre safety messages come mostly from charities, industry and local partners, without the reach and authority of the Government's own brand.

Why casualty data understates the case

- **Police-recorded data under-counts tyre defects.** Contributory factors are an officer's judgement at the scene, usually without specialist tyre examination. Around 450 collisions a year are recorded with a tyre factor, against over 2 million MOT tyre failures. (DfT; DVSA)
- **In-depth investigation tells a different story.** In fatal collisions on motorways and major A-roads between 2014 and 2022, tyres were the most common vehicle defect: 42% of all defects found, and 49% in cars. 71% of those tyre defects were due to a lack of maintenance. (TRL, 2023)

- **Better measures are available.** The leading and lagging MOT indicators in our Goal 6 position paper would show the scale of the risk that casualty data misses.

What we are asking for, and from whom

The Department for Transport: run a THINK! campaign on tyre safety, and use MOT data alongside casualty data when setting THINK!'s priorities.

The THINK! team, in the meantime:

- consider endorsing TyreSafe's member-funded campaigns case by case, such as the **Young Driver campaign**, **Tyre Safety Month** each October and a campaign on **MOT advisories**, built around the message that an MOT pass is not a clean bill of health;
- include vehicle checks in THINK!'s young driver resources, and in the national guidance on road safety education and the Lifelong Learning manual the Strategy commits to publish.

What TyreSafe offers: the campaigns themselves, planned, created and paid for by TyreSafe and its members as now, with brand-neutral content for sign-off and an evaluation of each campaign shared with DfT.

Why we believe it would work

- **Endorsement has worked already.** Young Driver is TyreSafe's own campaign. THINK! agreed to lend it its branding, giving it more credibility and making it easier for local road safety partnerships to use as officially backed.
- **It fits the Strategy.** The Strategy commits the Government to "continue to encourage safer road user behaviours via THINK!", to a Lifelong Learning approach, and to national guidance on road safety education, training and publicity. It also names the TyreSafe programme as informing its Work-Related Road Safety Charter. (Road Safety Strategy, p. 22)
- **The interim step costs THINK! nothing.** Endorsement uses its brand and sign-off, not its budget.

How confident we are

LOW — That the Department for Transport will fund a THINK! campaign on tyre safety soon. THINK!'s budget has been cut and it sets priorities by casualty data, where tyres rank low. Practical if DfT engages, but it has not yet.

HIGH — That a THINK! campaign would add reach and authority if DfT agreed, and that case-by-case endorsement works, as Young Driver shows.

MODERATE TO LOW — That awareness campaigns on their own change maintenance behaviour. The evidence for publicity alone is weaker than for campaigns combined with enforcement or personal prompts. That is why this goal is one part of a package with advisory reminders, a defect retraining course and better enforcement, and why every campaign would be evaluated.

Concerns and our response

Concern	Our response
Casualty data does not justify a tyre campaign	Police-recorded data under-counts tyre defects. In-depth investigation of fatal collisions finds tyres are the most common vehicle defect, and MOT data shows the scale of the risk.
THINK! has no budget for it	The interim ask costs THINK! nothing: endorsement of campaigns TyreSafe's members already fund.
An industry-supported charity could use THINK! for commercial ends	All content would be brand-neutral, with no products, retailers or brands, and THINK! would keep sign-off. TyreSafe is a registered charity acting in the public interest.
Campaigns don't change behaviour	Each campaign would be evaluated, and the messages would point drivers to specific actions, such as acting on an MOT advisory.

What we are not asking for

- No endorsement of any product, retailer or brand.
- No blanket endorsement: THINK! would judge each TyreSafe campaign on its merits.
- Not a UK-wide THINK! campaign: THINK! covers England and Wales.

How this fits with our other goals

The MOT advisory campaign is the public side of our position on advisory reminders (Goal 3), and the Young Driver campaign reinforces our position on a practical tyre check in the driving test (Goal 1). The MOT-based indicators (Goal 6) would give DfT a better measure of tyre risk than casualty data alone.

Review and changes

TyreSafe reviews this position every year after its Young Driver campaign and Tyre Safety Month, using their evaluation results, and sooner if new evidence emerges. If the evidence changes, so will our position, and we will record what changed and why.

Version	Date	Change
1.0	November 2026	First published

Sources

- DfT, Road Safety Strategy (7 January 2026), p. 22
- DfT, Reported road casualties Great Britain 2025, table RAS0701 (tyre figures as extracted by TyreSafe)
- DVSA, MOT testing data 2025–26
- TRL, The effect of tyre defects on road collisions (October 2023), National Highways Fatality Research Database 2014–2022
- National Highways driver research (2026)
- RAC/Online95 driver survey (September 2024, 1,775 drivers)
- Anyline/TyreSafe/Opinium driver survey (September 2024, 2,000 drivers)
- TyreSafe/Opinium driver survey (April 2026, 2,000 adults)
- THINK!, campaign priorities and FAQs (think.gov.uk)