TyreSafe

SAFE TYRES SAVE LIVES

POSITION PAPER

tyresafe.org

A driver retraining course for vehicle defects

Goal 5

POSITION AS AT	VERSION	NEXT REVIEW
November 2026	1.0	After Home Office roads policing statistics to December 2025 are published

Our position

When police stop a driver for most low-level motoring offences, the usual outcome today is a retraining course. For vehicle defects, it almost never is. TyreSafe calls for a National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) course for drivers stopped with defective tyres, brakes, steering or lights: a short online course, offered instead of a fixed penalty and only once the vehicle has been repaired. The law already allows it. TyreSafe is ready to fund the research needed to build it, or to seek support from funders such as the Road Safety Trust, with the course designed and owned by UKROEd. The NPCC and UKROEd, both TyreSafe supporters, have welcomed the idea in principle. This paper sets out the case so that others can support it too.

The problem

- **Defects are common and often dangerous.** In 2025–26, 9.16 million cars and light vans failed at their initial MOT test, and 2.41 million had at least one dangerous defect. Tyres and brakes make up about nine in ten dangerous defects found. (DVSA)
- **The commonest failures are ones drivers can check.** Lights, tyres, brakes, wipers and screens top the list of MOT failure categories. (DVSA)
- **Fatal tyre defects are mostly a maintenance failure.** In fatal collisions on motorways and major A-roads between 2014 and 2022, 71% of tyre defects were due to a lack of maintenance: 75% for cars and 61% for other vehicles. That is exactly the habit a course would address. (TRL, 2023)
- **Tyre-related casualties are rising.** Killed or seriously injured casualties where defective tyres were a factor rose from 117 in 2021 to 201 in 2025. (DfT RAS0701)
- **Between tests, it is up to the driver.** A car's first MOT is at three years old, then once a year. In between, roadworthiness depends on the driver noticing and acting.

The gap: enforcement fixes the car, not the habit

- **Education is now the main police response to motoring offences.** In 2024, 51% of fixed-penalty-eligible motoring offences in England and Wales (excluding the Met) ended in a retraining course: 1.50 million cases. Careless driving went to a course in 68% of cases and speeding in 54%. (Home Office)
- **Defect offences are the exception.** Police recorded 16,170 offences of using a vehicle or part in a dangerous or defective condition in 2024, up from 5,920 in 2017. 73% ended in a fixed penalty, 25% in court and just 2% in a course, with no course designed for defects. A further 5,245 lighting offences all ended in a fine or court. (Home Office)
- **No NDORS course addresses vehicle condition.** There are courses for speed, motorway driving, careless driving, motorcycling, seat belts and cycling.
- **A fine punishes but does not inform.** It neither guarantees the repair nor helps the driver spot the next defect. The existing Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme gets a vehicle repaired, but does nothing about how the driver checks it afterwards.

What we are asking for, and from whom

- **The NPCC Roads Policing portfolio:** ask UKROEd to scope a vehicle defect course, and support a pilot.
- **UKROEd:** scope, design and approve the course through its Course Development Unit, as for every NDORS course, and decide how the three-year "similar course" rule applies.
- **Police forces:** pilot the course, then offer it where a driver could reasonably have detected the defect.

How it would work

1. An officer finds an eligible defect and makes a conditional course offer, as for other NDORS courses.
2. The driver has the vehicle repaired and proves it within 14 days, using the existing Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme certificate.
3. The driver completes a short online course on vehicle checks and maintenance habits.
4. Completion closes the matter with no points. Failing either step returns the case to a fixed penalty or court.

What TyreSafe offers: funding for independent behavioural research and a draft course, or help to secure funding from organisations such as the Road Safety Trust, depending on what is needed. The draft course would be designed with UKROEd and licensed to it royalty-free. We also offer our data and expertise. Design, branding, fees and ownership would rest entirely with UKROEd.

Why we believe it would work

- **No new law is needed.** The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 gave police a clear power to offer approved courses instead of prosecution, and the Courses Offered as an Alternative to Prosecution Regulations 2025 make every fixed penalty offence eligible. Defective tyres, brakes, steering and lights are fixed penalty offences.
- **Retraining courses work for other offences.** An independent evaluation found the National Speed Awareness Course more effective than a fine and penalty points at reducing speeding reoffending over three years (Ipsos MORI, 2018). TRL's 2024 evaluation of NDORS courses found consistent signs of positive impact. (TRL, 2024)
- **The law already treats knowledge as central.** Courts cannot endorse a licence for brake, steering or tyre offences where the driver did not know, and had no reasonable cause to suspect, the defect. A course that builds that knowledge fits the law's own logic.

- **Volumes are enough for an online course.** Over 21,000 defect and lighting offences a year, and rising. Seat belt offences, at around 44,000, sustain their own online course.
- **Results can be measured objectively.** Unlike most courses, a defect course can be evaluated through drivers' later MOT results, not just what they say.

How confident we are

HIGH That the legal route exists and that defects are the clear gap in the scheme.

MODERATE That a course would change behaviour. The strongest evidence is for speed awareness. The short online courses closest to what we propose have less evaluation behind them, and no defect course has yet been tested. That is why we propose research and a pilot before any national roll-out, and why we are offering to fund them.

Concerns and our response

Concern	Our response
A course is a soft option	It is offered only after proof of repair, and repeat offenders are excluded for three years. Speeding is also strict liability and is the scheme's largest course.
The Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme already deals with defects	That scheme fixes the vehicle. The course addresses the habit that let the defect develop. They work together.
Drivers already face repair bills	The repair is needed either way. The course replaces the fine and points, and we propose a fee below current classroom courses.
Fleet drivers may not control maintenance	The first version is for private motorists. A fleet version can follow.
The idea comes from a charity supported by the tyre industry	The research would be independent, the content brand-neutral, and the course designed and owned by UKROEd.

What we are not asking for

- No new law or police powers.
- No change for serious cases: a defect involved in a collision, or one the driver could not reasonably have detected, would not be eligible.
- No TyreSafe branding, and no product, retailer or industry messaging in the course.
- No replacement for the Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme, which the course builds on.

How this fits with our other goals

This is the education side of enforcement (Goal 4). The MOT-based indicator (Goal 6) would give a measure of whether better checking habits are reaching the fleet, and our position on advisory reminders (Goal 3) addresses the same habit before a driver is ever stopped.

Review and changes

TyreSafe reviews this position every year when new Home Office roads policing statistics and DVSA MOT data are published, and sooner if new evidence emerges, including results from research or a pilot. 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

- DVSA, MOT testing data for Great Britain, class 3 and 4, April 2025 to March 2026 (updated 10 September 2026)
- DfT, Reported road casualties Great Britain 2025, table RAS0701 (tyre figures as extracted by TyreSafe)
- TRL, analysis of tyre defects in fatal collisions on motorways and major A-roads, 2014–2022 (October 2023)
- Home Office, Police powers and procedures: Roads policing, to December 2024 (19 March 2026), tables FPN2a and FPN3; England and Wales excluding the Metropolitan Police
- Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022; Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988, Part 3B and section 48
- The Courses Offered as an Alternative to Prosecution Regulations 2025 (SI 2025/238)
- Ipsos MORI and Barrett, Impact evaluation of the National Speed Awareness Course (2018)
- TRL, Evaluation of NDORS courses, PPR2013 (September 2024)
- DfT, Road Safety Strategy (January 2026)