

Scheme will monitor young people's driving safety

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By Keith Morris » AN ELECTRONIC 'spy-in-the-car' could save lives and money for young drivers. Drivers aged between 17 and 21 are being invited to take part in a pilot road safety scheme being launched to help them improve their driving skills and increase road safety.

The scheme, funded by the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership,

involves fitting a small sensor to a vehicle's dashboard for 12 months. The device is capable of measuring up to 120 different hazardous driving manoeuvres and transmits the data to a secure website where the drivers and their parents or guardians can review how they are driving using a simple traffic light system – good driving shows in green, bad in amber and red.

The sensor also alerts drivers when they perform a hazardous manoeuvre. For example, an LED flashes red or amber if a driver brakes hard into a bend.

The more green lights a driver obtains, the bigger the rewards, such as possible reductions in car insurance premiums and the opportunity to earn High Street shopping vouchers worth up to £156.

A dedicated advanced driving instructor will coach the driver during the programme, providing follow-up mentoring on how to improve their driving and discuss the errors that may have been made and how to avoid them in the future.

Statistics show that: Nearly 40 per cent of those killed or seriously injured on Cheshire's roads are aged between 17-25.

One in five drivers will have a crash within 12 months of passing their test.

One in three men will have a collision within the first two years of passing their test.

Sarah Collins, senior road safety officer at Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC) said: "By regularly reviewing and assessing driving patterns and behaviours with their families and road safety trainers, young drivers can learn how to develop their driving skills and confidence, and reduce dangerous and inappropriate behaviour."

CWAC is releasing a limited number of places on the scheme, which will be subsidised by the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership.

Anyone interested should contact the road safety unit on 01244 976713 or email roadsafety@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk for an application form and further information.