

Speed cameras

A snapshot of
drivers' opinions



About the IAM

The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) is the UK's largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to improving standards and safety in driving, motorcycling and cycling. Best known for the advanced test the IAM has more than 100,000 members and is supported by a local volunteer network of 200 groups in the UK and Ireland. We provide driver risk management solutions to businesses through our commercial arm, IAM Drive & Survive, and driver retraining through IAM Driver Retraining Academy.

The IAM's policy and research division offers advice and expertise on road safety, and publishes original research on road safety issues.



Speed cameras

Road safety cameras (speed cameras) are in use across England, Scotland and Wales and have been for over twenty years, since the Road Traffic Act (1991) enabled courts to accept evidence from approved cameras.

Speed cameras are an emotive issue for motorists with many sceptical of their effectiveness in reducing road injury and death and some suggestion that they may actually lead to increased casualties. The vast majority of evidence from within the UK and comparable international examples is that speed cameras do, often significantly, reduce road casualties.

An RAC Foundation study found a drop in casualties of 27% after speed cameras were installed, despite a few sites (less than 4%) which did see a casualty increase. One of the biggest criticisms of speed cameras is that they are used to generate revenue from the motorist for those who run them. This is in fact untrue and all income from fines for speeding are, and always have been, returned to the Treasury. A four year evaluation of the national safety camera programme estimated that the annual economic benefit of cameras was over £258 million, compared with enforcement costs of about £96 million.

The IAM has always supported the use of speed cameras, providing they are used alongside other education, enforcement and infrastructure measures. We believe their use as a deterrent and enforcement tool helps reduce road casualties and that they have become an essential part of the road safety toolkit.

The IAM believes that more priority should be given to reducing speeding through increased incentives to take advanced driving courses. The IAM also supports the use of speed awareness courses as an alternative to fines for those who have been caught speeding. Courses such as these provide the opportunity for drivers to be made more aware of the risks of speeding and the dangers of reckless driving. Evaluation of such courses show recidivism is reduced but more research is required to highlight the benefits.

Speed cameras often receive negative coverage in the media, however public opinion has, for many years, been in favour of their use and awareness is high of their safety benefits. Each year the survey asks drivers exactly the same series of questions, allowing us to track changes in opinions over time. The survey gives a useful insight into driver's views and experiences of speed cameras; it is not designed to be an analysis of effectiveness of speed cameras. All survey results are weighted and have full breakdown by gender, region, age, social class and driver mileage. This year we commissioned Lake Market Research to conduct the survey.



The main findings from the 1,004 responses are:

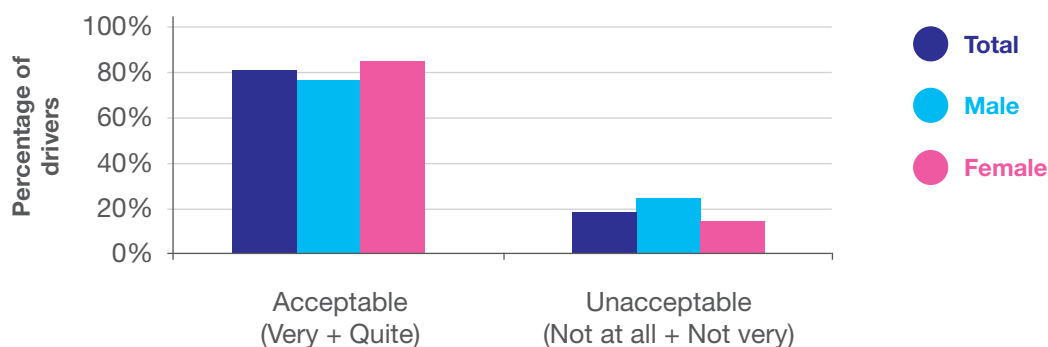
- 80% of drivers find the use of speed cameras acceptable or very acceptable.
- Women are more supportive of speed camera use than men.
- 79% of drivers think speed cameras have contributed to reduced road deaths in recent years.
- 75% of drivers supported speed awareness courses instead of fines for drivers caught speeding with a clean license. 84% of 17-24 year olds support speed awareness courses.

Acceptance of Speed Cameras

There is widespread support for the use of speed cameras; 80% of drivers find them quite or very acceptable. Only 6% find them not at all acceptable. Women are more prone to support speed cameras than men (39 percent of women compared to 29 percent of men), women have been more supportive of speed cameras than men in every year that the survey has been conducted. Young drivers between the ages of 17-24 were the most supportive age category, followed closely by the over sixty five year olds.

These results show support for speed cameras is slightly down on last year but still significantly better than in 2007. This year 18 percent of drivers were generally unsupportive compared to 2007 when 30 percent of drivers were unsupportive. This year the highest support for cameras was in Wales (87%), followed closely by drivers in the South East and London (86%) and the North East (84%). At 82% acceptance we find the South West and the West Midlands, closely followed by the East of England (81%), North West (78%), Yorkshire and Humberside (77%) and East Midlands (75%). The region with the least supportive drivers was Scotland at 63%.

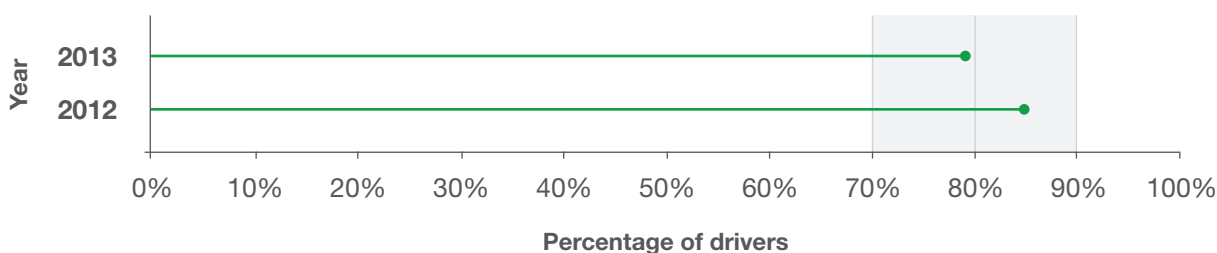
Drivers' acceptance of speed cameras



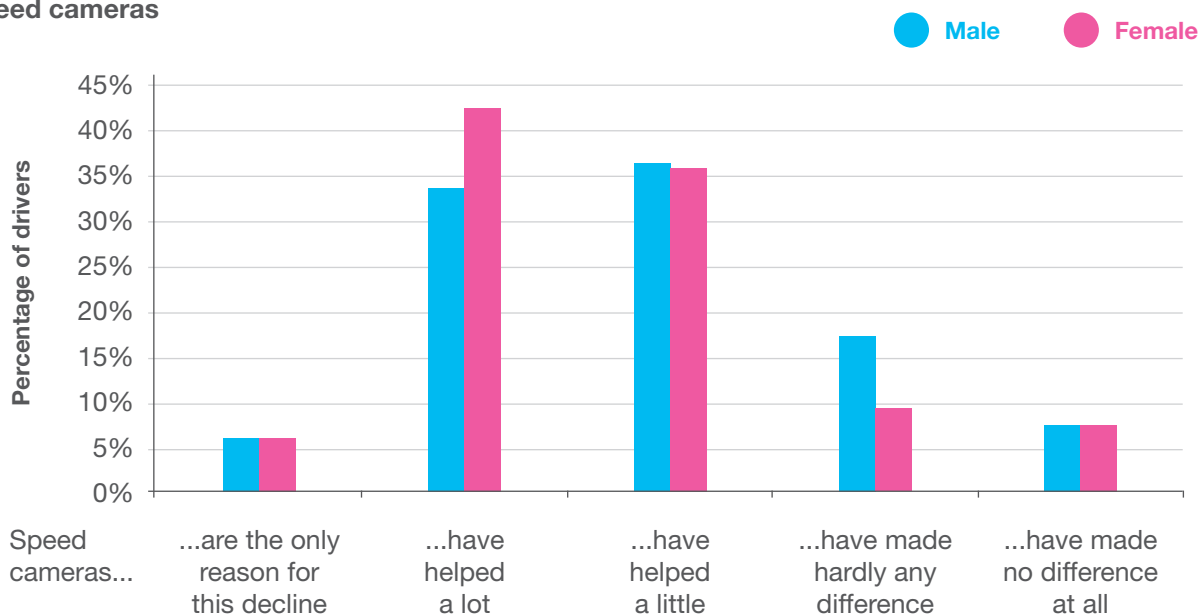
Belief that speed cameras improve road safety

The majority of drivers believe that speed cameras improve road safety. 79 percent of respondents think that speed cameras have, in some way helped contribute to the fall in road deaths since the 1990s. Year on year there has been a 6 per cent drop in drivers who feel speed cameras help contribute to falling road casualty figures. This is a notable drop, even when a margin for error of 3 percent is considered.

Percentage of drivers who feel that speed cameras contribute to a fall in road injuries and deaths



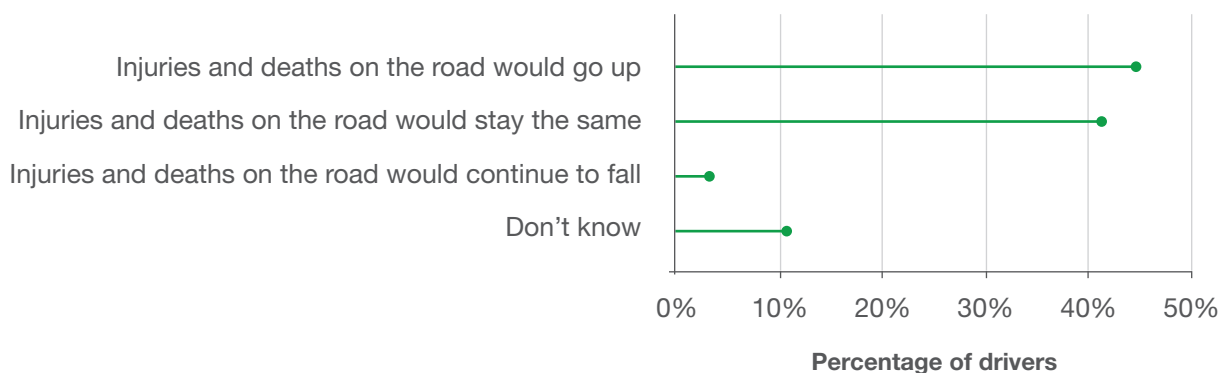
Drivers' thoughts on the effectiveness of speed cameras



Mostly drivers thought that speed cameras had helped a lot (38 percent) while a similar amount thought that speed cameras had helped a little (36 percent). 6 percent of drivers thought that speed cameras were the only reason for the reduction in road deaths.

It seems that drivers are divided on whether or not turning off speed cameras would have an effect on road injuries and deaths with 44 percent thinking this would lead to a rise and 42 percent thinking that this would lead to no change. Only 3% of drivers think that this would result in continued road injury and death reduction.

Drivers' thoughts on how turning off speed cameras would effect injuries and deaths on the road



Placement of speed cameras



The Department for Transport recommends that safety cameras should be installed:

- On roads with a history of traffic collisions
- Where there is evidence of a speeding problem
- If there is local community concern

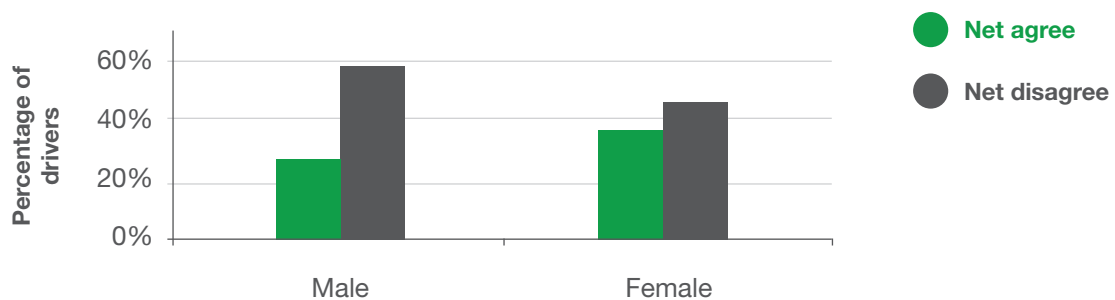
In 2011 the government published detailed local authority information on speed camera sites. This aimed to improve transparency around decisions to install cameras following criticism that speed cameras were used to generate revenue rather than respond to a genuine road safety problem.

The results of the IAM survey show that there appears to be some limited agreement with the idea that speed cameras are targeted on roads with some history of road accidents.

Fifty two percent of drivers disagree with the statement ***'Speed cameras are only sited at the places where accidents are happening'*** (32 per cent agree). Respondents were far more likely to strongly disagree than to strongly agree (18 percent versus 8 percent).

Drivers' agreement with the statement:

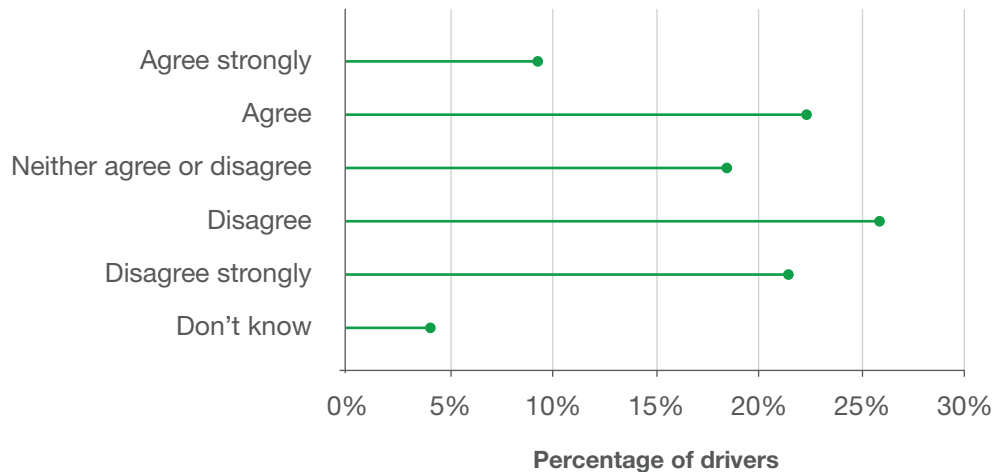
'Speed cameras are only sited at the places where accidents are happening'



Views on motives for speed cameras

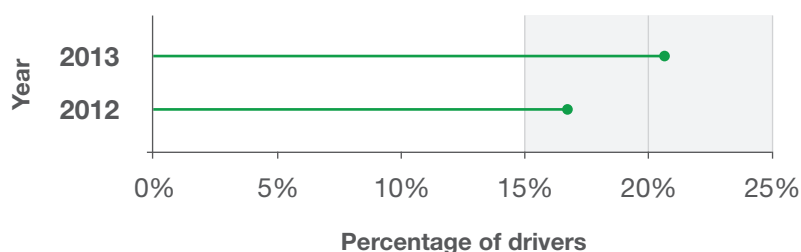
There are frequent criticisms that speed cameras are primarily sources of revenue rather than a road safety measure. We asked the extent that drivers agree with the statement '**Raising money from fines is not the motive for speed cameras**'.

Drivers' agreement with the statement:
'Raising money from fines is not the motive for speed cameras'.



Thirty percent of drivers agree with this statement (8 percent strongly agree), while 47 percent disagree (21 percent strongly disagree). Despite the widely held view among respondents that speed cameras improve safety on the road, there is still much scepticism about the motives for cameras. Nearly half the respondents consider money to be a motivating factor in speed camera installation and only a third believe it isn't. There has been a slight increase year on year in the number of respondents who strongly feel money is the motive for installing speed cameras, 17 percent in 2012 and 21 percent in 2013.

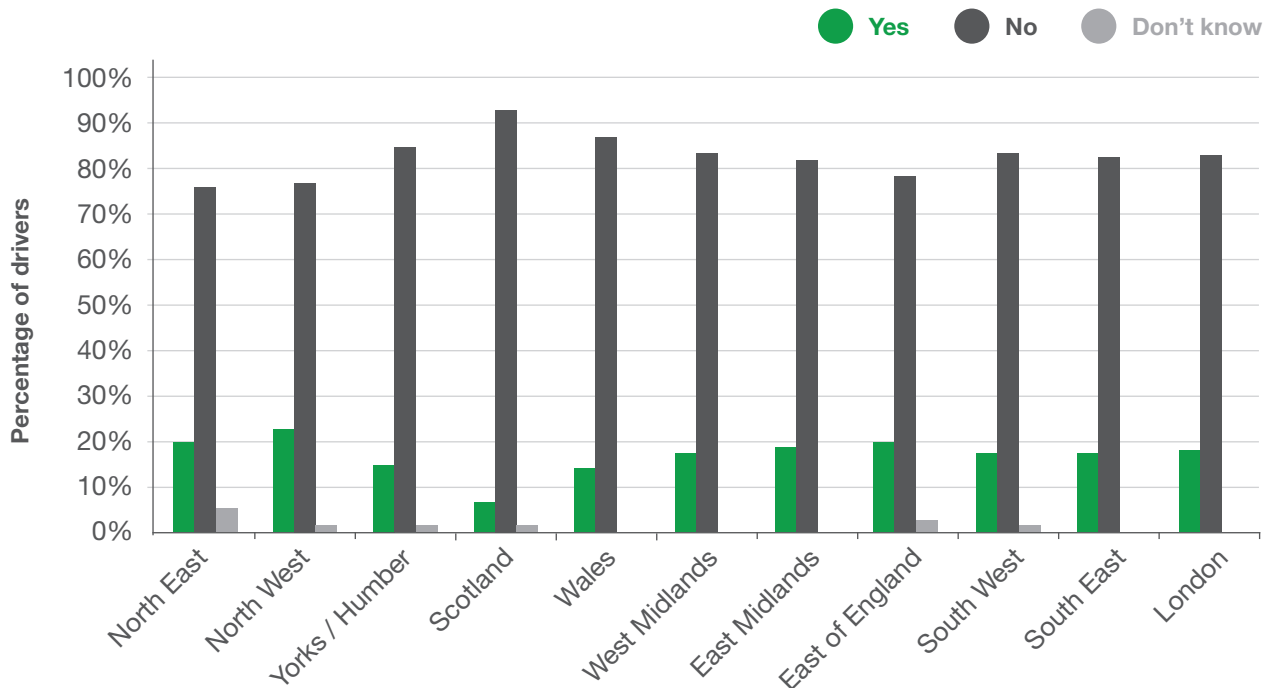
Percentage of drivers who strongly feel that money is a motivating factor in the use of speed cameras



Speeding offence convictions

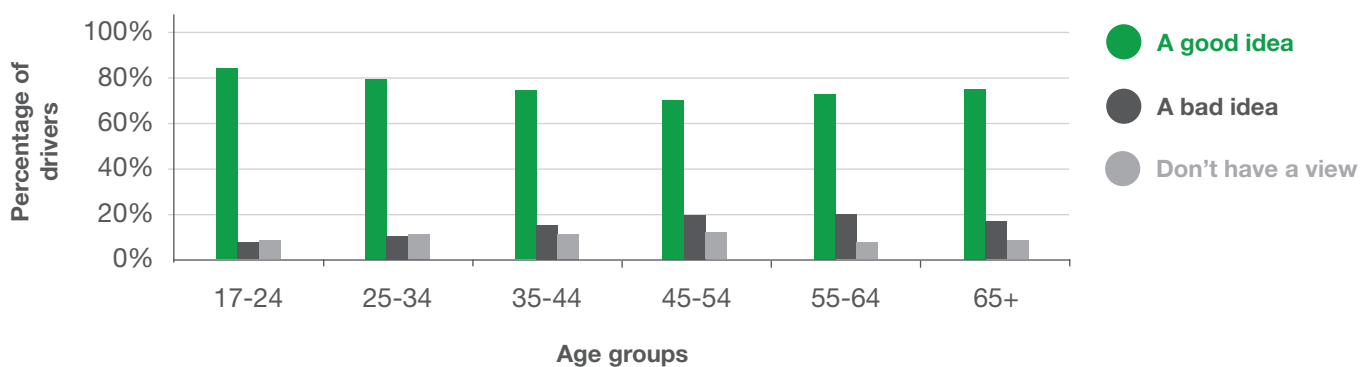
Seventeen percent of drivers said that they or someone in their household had been convicted of a speeding offence in the last three years. Those in the northwest were most likely to report speeding convictions (22 percent), followed by the North East and East of England (20 percent). Those from Scotland were the least likely to report a speeding offence (6 percent) followed by Wales (13 percent).

Likelihood of reporting a speeding offence conviction

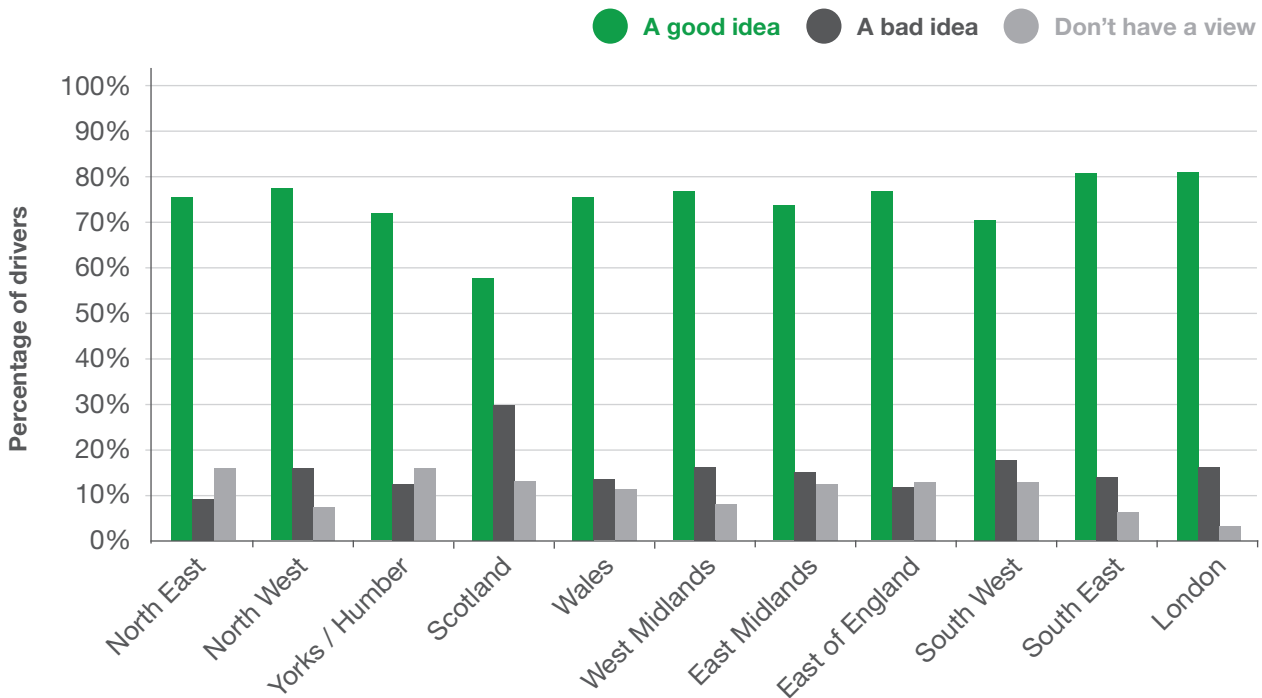


Speed Awareness courses

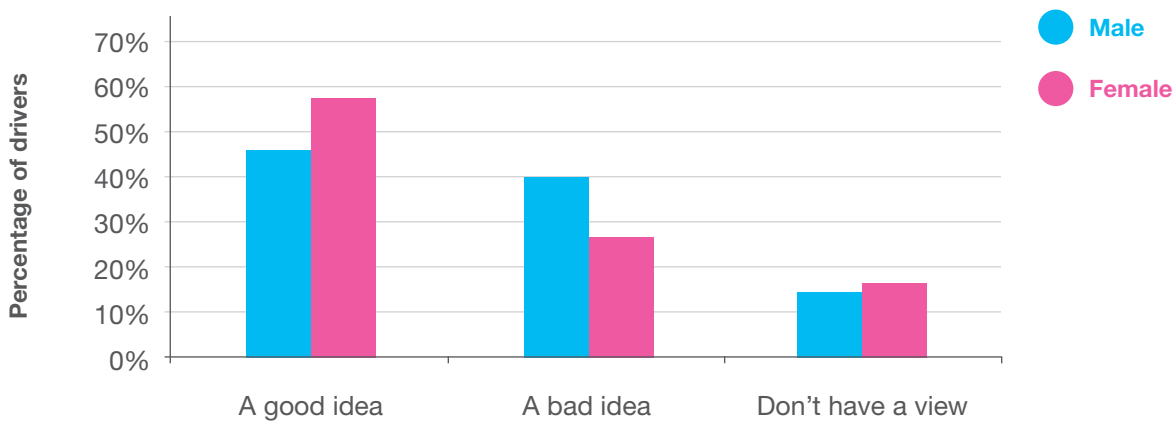
Seventy-five percent of drivers think it is a good idea to offer speed awareness courses as an alternative to fines and penalty points. This idea is most popular among the 17-24 years age groups, in this category 84 percent of drivers support this. The 45 – 54 years group are least supportive, but still are largely in favour with 71 percent.



Scottish respondents are most against speed awareness courses with 30 percent seeing this as a bad idea. The rest of the country has between 11 and 17 percent against, with the North East having only 9 percent against.



Fifty-two percent of respondents thought it was a good idea to use part of the course cost to fund the operation of speed cameras to replace government funding. This is much less than the overall support for speed awareness courses.



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