



Welsh drivers are the ... most forgetful

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Welsh drivers are among the highest to admit memory loss behind the wheel.

A startling number of drivers or 15% have very often or quite often experienced episodes where they can't remember the last few moments, or longer, of their journeys, according to new research from the AA.

The findings are based on an AA Populus poll of 27,662 drivers. Perhaps contrary to expectations the motoring memory blanks are more often experienced by younger rather than older drivers.

More drivers (17%) from Yorkshire, Humberside and Wales admit to memory blanks than drivers from any other parts of the UK. Drivers less likely to forget where they have come from live in London and Scotland (12%).

Female drivers (17%) are more likely to admit to motoring memory blanks than males drivers (13%) and 31% of men are adamant they never forget.

Edmund King, AA president, said, "Our AA/Populus study shows that one in seven drivers often go into autopilot whilst driving. There may be many reasons for this, including being distracted by phone or passenger conversations, being engrossed in music or radio discussions or possibly just day dreaming.

"Until the advent of driverless cars we would prefer drivers to be more alert behind the wheel. Motoring memory blanks may be an indication that the driver is not concentrating on the road ahead.



“It is good practice as a driver to question yourself as to whether you could safely stop if a child walked out from behind that parked car. Many drivers also go into autopilot when they are close to home after a long journey and that is a good time to remind yourself to concentrate harder to get home safely.

“Whilst the *Thought Police* can’t and shouldn’t stop drivers from thinking, the number one priority whilst behind the wheel should be concentration on the road ahead.”

The AA believes that lack of concentration may well contribute to the most common contributory factors in accidents.

Government figures show that the most common factor identified by police officers was failed to look properly. This was recorded in 44 per cent of all accidents in 2014. The contributory factor loss of control was reported in 32 per cent of fatal accidents in 2014.

The pair of contributor factors most frequently recorded for the same vehicle were failed to look properly and failed to judge other person’s path or speed.

Another consequence of motoring memory blanks is that drivers often don’t know where they are if they have broken down or had an accident.



What they were asked

While driving, how often would you say you have experienced the feeling that you cannot recall the last few moments (or slightly longer) of your journey? E.g. a feeling like 'how did I get here?'

Very/quite often

18-24 yr olds	21%
25-34 yr olds	24%
55-64 yr olds	14%
Over 65s	9%

Breakdown organisations and the emergency services often find that drivers on main routes run into trouble and don't know which section they are driving on - or which junctions they have passed.

In the past an AA patrol might spend considerable time searching up and down a stretch of road for a member in distress but the vehicle was much further up the road than the member thought.

Locating a member sometimes came down to asking them to point out nearby landmarks and this is where a satnav can play a useful roll when checked by a driver.