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EDUCATION COURSE GETS GREEN LIGHT

A new driver education initiative has been launched to try to reduce the high number of motorists and motorcyclists driving through red traffic lights in Avon and Somerset.

Nearly 6,000 drivers a year are fined for “jumping” the lights at busy junctions, putting themselves, their passengers and other road users at risk.

Now drivers who ignore red lights are being given the option of attending a three-hour long road safety workshop instead of having three penalty points on their licence.

It is hoped the workshops, which are held at Shirehampton, Keynsham and Taunton, will change their attitude and behaviour and improve safety at some of the area’s busiest junctions.

Although they will avoid having penalty points on their licence, drivers will have to pay a £60 fee to cover the cost of the workshop.

Speeding car drivers and motorcyclists are already being given the chance to attend the Speed Choice road safety workshop to avoid penalty points on their licence.

More than 120,000 drivers have attended a Speed Choice workshop in the past six years and the feedback has proved extremely positive with 98 per cent grading the sessions as “good” or “excellent” and the vast majority saying it had changed their driving.

Speed Choice education development manager Richard Fairhurst said: “Changing driver behaviour is a key factor in helping to reduce collisions and injuries on our roads and education is playing an increasingly important role in our casualty reduction programmes.

“Ignoring traffic lights is clearly highly dangerous yet thousands of drivers in Avon and Somerset do it every year.

“The amber traffic light means ‘Stop’. Drivers who put their foot down to try to beat the lights are acting irresponsibly and putting lives at risk.

“That split-second decision to drive through the lights could have life-long consequences.”

Forty-two of the busiest traffic-light controlled junctions in Avon and Somerset are monitored by cameras.

The full range of Speed Choice workshops and education programmes can be found on its website www.speedchoice.org.uk