

Extracts from Standard Operating Procedure – DVLA medical referral bookings**SYNOPSIS**

DVLA have introduced a new medical appraisal that will be conducted by DSA's Driver Training Assessment Managers (DTAM) on their behalf. The appraisal is intended to assess a person's overall ability to drive and (where applicable) identify areas of weakness; however it will not result in a pass or fail. The completed appraisal is sent to DVLA's medical team who will make the decision whether the person is fit to continue driving.

DVLA medical referral bookings – Ref COB/STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES//****

Aim:	To ensure all medical referrals are dealt with efficiently and appraisals booked.
Audience:	To be read by any staff involved in dealing with medical referrals or queries regarding medical referrals.
Objectives:	To provide an efficient and consistent booking process that allows appraisals to be conducted on behalf of DVLA.
Operators:	These procedures will apply to Check Test Teams (CTT) and Driver Training Assessment Managers (DTAM).
Training:	There is no requirement for formal training. Staff should read this document to familiarise themselves with these procedures.
Organisation:	DVLA will instigate the procedure, Check test team will book appointments and DTAMs will conduct the appraisals.
Glossary:	CTT = Check Test Team DSA = Driving Standards Agency DTAM = Driver Training Assessment Managers DVLA = Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency MTV = Minimum Test Vehicle

Introduction and background

DVLA have introduced a new medical appraisal that will be conducted by DSA's Driver Training Assessment Managers (DTAM) on their behalf. The appraisal is intended to assess a person's overall ability to drive and (where applicable) identify areas of weakness. A pass or fail will not be given at the end of the appraisal, however feedback will be given to the candidate at the end of the drive, including (if applicable) recommendation they seek further driver development and in extreme cases will advise that the candidate should not drive* until they hear from DVLA and that this will be recorded on the appraisal report. The completed documents are then sent to DVLA's medical team who make the final decision on whether the person is fit to continue driving.

*Should this occur the examiner will notify CTT, who will immediately notify DVLA Driver Medical Unit

This standard operating procedure provides the end to end process for booking DVLA medical referrals and for handling the documents produced from the appraisal.

Appraisal slot information

Appraisal drives will last 38 to 40 min, and are designed to fit into a single 57 minutes. However these are currently being scheduled into DTAM programmes at 1.5 hour slots.

Wordings and Guidance for Examiners

Before arrival at the test centre DTAM's are to ensure that the relevant paperwork and envelopes have been provided.

In the waiting room

The candidate will have been informed why the appraisal is required via a letter and leaflet from DVLA. Examiners are advised to avoid entering in to discussion on this point and refer the customer to the information they initially received from DVLA and confirm that you have been asked to assess their driving. DVLA will be in touch after the appraisal.

If the candidate fails to attend standard FTA procedures apply. Complete the report section on the reverse of the form and post to DVLA in the envelopes provided.

"Good morning/afternoon Mr/Mrs/Ms XXXX. My name is XXXXX. Pleased to meet you".

"May I see your driving licence and identification**"*

"Is your name and address still the same as on your driving licence? If not ... Could you please enter your new address on the counterpart (or in the appropriate place on the old style paper licences) of your licence".

*Candidates may not have a licence but be in possession of a letter from DVLA (PDAL) authorising them to drive for the specified time of the appraisal. Examiners should also check for any restrictions on the licence and ensure that if vehicle adaptations are required (including automatic transmission) the vehicle to be used complies.

** Candidates will be told to bring the DVLA referral letter and identification with them. They may not have a photocard driving licence. A paper licence, or PDAL (provisional driving approval letter from DVLA) plus another form of identification, such as a valid passport, national ID card, work or college photo ID, a travel pass, or a photograph certified (signed) by a professional person who has known you for at least two years (such as a doctor, bank manager, police officer, teacher and so on) is acceptable. If no/incomplete identification is presented the appraisal can not take place. Note that no identification was presented on the reverse of the form and post to DVLA in the envelopes provided.

N.B Candidates are asked to provide a mirror of the use of the examiner, but examiners should always check and be prepared to supply a DSA mirror.

"Read and sign the declaration here please. This is to verify that you are insured to drive the vehicle you have brought today and that you are licensed for that vehicle".

“(If applicable) Would you like your accompanying driver/ADI to accompany you on the drive? They would encourage them to come along but it’s totally up to you”.

“Please lead the way to your car”

If introductions weren’t completed in waiting room please do introduction here: “My name is XXX. What would you like me to call you etc”.

“Which car are you using?
Will you read the number ofcar.....”

If eyesight test is failed the appraisal is terminated and top copy issued. Please fax the report to CTT and send the original form in post to DVLA as confirmation.

CTT will then email DVLA and inform them immediately of the failed eye sight test.

“If you would like to make yourself comfortable in your car now please, I will join you in a moment.”

In car pre-brief:

The candidate will have been informed why the appraisal is required via a letter and leaflet from DVLA. Several candidates however have indicated to the examiner uncertainty as to why the appraisal is required. Examiners are advised to avoid entering in to discussion on this point and refer the customer to the information they initially received from DVLA and confirm that you have been asked to assess their driving. DVLA will be in touch after the appraisal.

“You’ve been asked to come along today by DVLA Medical Unit and I understand that the information from this driving appraisal is considered in conjunction with other information DVLA hold about your condition and they will contact you in due course. I don’t know anything at all about your history, nor do I need to unless you feel there is something I should know which relates directly to how you use the controls of the car”.

(If during the drive you feel there is some form of undeclared disability i.e. restricted movement. Please feel free to pull the candidate up and discreetly discuss. A simple adaptation may be all that is required to improve their driving i.e. suitable positioned mirrors, automatic transmission and this can be mentioned on the report to DVLA).

“Also, I’m sure you are aware that I cannot give you any decision, or outcome at the end of the drive and that DVLA will contact you in due course”.

“The drive itself will last about 38-40 minutes and it will take in various roads and traffic conditions. Just continue ahead, unless traffic signs direct you otherwise, and when I want you to turn left or right I will tell you in plenty of time”.

“I will ask you to drive for a short time independently but before this I will pull you up and give you instructions. Do you have any difficulty reading and following traffic signs*?”

*Although we anticipate this to be very rare, you will need to have a verbal route/diagrams prepared and with you in case candidate cannot read signs.

"Please XX(name)XX feel free to ask me any questions at any time during the drive. Remember, this isn't a learner driving test, so just relax and enjoy your drive."

The appraisal will then be conducted. The appraisal is a competency based assessment where the focus is placed upon safety not methodology.

Fault level definitions

Performance levels for DVLA Driver Medical Unit Appraisal Drives in relation to the fault definitions and criteria required for the Category B official driving test.

A. Consistently safe and responsible driving

No faults at all, or:

Fault identified – not worthy (not worthy of recording).

- Any insignificant deviation from the defined outcome that does not compromise safety or can be a matter of finesse. For example – Dry steering, sequential gear changes, not pressing the button on top of the handbrake when applying it.

Fault identified – Driving Fault

- Low Risk - Any sufficient deviation from the defined outcome that does not compromise safety, or can be a matter of control - to justify a fault being recorded. However, minor lapse(s) in isolated instance(s) allows the overall (or holistic) view of performance to still be assessed at level A.

B. Safe and responsible driving but with minor lapses – driver development beneficial

Fault identified – Driving Fault

- Low Risk - Any sufficient deviation from the defined outcome that does not compromise safety, or can be a matter of control - to justify a fault being recorded. A single significant road safety lapse and/or a number of minor lapses occurring within driving will result in level B rating.

It should be noted that for an overall result at level B driver development would be beneficial.

C. Important lapse(s) indicating driver development required to reach the minimum driving standard

Fault identified – Serious fault (or lapse) - entails immediate failure of the Category B official driving test

There can however be occasions when a specific driving fault could by constant repetition, be regarded as a serious driving lapse and therefore a significant risk. For example, when a candidate habitually fails to take mirror observation when appropriate, or habitually displays lack of steering control, or is habitually unable to move away without stalling the engine.

A considerable number (16 or more) driving faults (minor lapses) committed, within any or all of the areas is sufficient to be considered a significant risk and will be regarded as a serious lapse.

- Road Safety Risk - Significant deviation from the defined outcome with safety, control and/or legal requirement breached.

NB: DVLA Medical Appraisal drives are not standard licence acquisition novice 'L' tests. During the appraisal drive an important lapse may occur but the overall (or holistic) view of

the drive may still be assessed at performance level B. However, the candidate should be aware that if the overall result is marked at performance level C driver development is recommended.

D. Dangerous action(s) indicating driving is not safe

Fault identified – Dangerous fault – (entails immediate failure of the Category B official driving test)

- High Road Safety Risk – Extreme deviation from the defined outcome with safety, control and/or legal requirement breached.
- Actual Danger - Safety, control and/or legal requirement breached that would have caused actual danger. For example – the candidate did not take effective observation before emerging at the junction completely misjudged both speed and distance of an approaching vehicle. The examiner had to take appropriate action to avoid a collision.

Examiners, may have to take 'action' when it becomes necessary to do so in the interest of public safety, including their own and that of the candidate. Such intervention may be either verbal* or physical. An event may be marked D without the examiner taking action i.e. if another driver/road user has been forced to take evasive action.

Should any area be marked at performance level D the overall (holistic) view of the drive will be viewed as compromising road safety to an unacceptable degree and will, therefore, be rated accordingly at level D indicating driving is not safe.

Verbal Guidance/Action

Verbal guidance may be offered during a DVLA Medical Appraisal Drive and will not be considered as verbal 'action', given that the guidance offered was acted upon and remedied within the drive.

However, should the examiner state (comments box) that guidance had been offered but not acted upon, the specific area - and the overall result – would only achieve a maximum of level C performance. For example: 'Despite guidance candidate continued to drive too close to parked cars', or 'Despite guidance candidate continued throughout the drive to position vehicle too close to centre of road'

Verbal 'action' taken by the examiner in the interest of public safety will result in the specific area being annotated at performance level D - and for the overall assessment. (See Actual Danger above)

Termination arrangements

Standard termination rulings apply. If you feel that the candidate is a danger to themselves or to public safety (rather than having committed the odd dangerous fault) end the appraisal, enter the appropriate termination code on the appraisal form and debrief with the following:

"As you are aware there were aspects of your driving that became dangerous and I would recommend you seriously consider not driving at least until DVLA have contacted you"

"Goodbye"

Post test

After returning to the test centre:

“Thank you. That’s the end of the drive. Please switch off your engine and take your seat belt off if you wish. Just give me a moment to complete the form”.

“Here is your copy of the appraisal (second copy). The assessment levels are all explained here. I will send a copy of this form, together with a short report to DVLA today and they will inform you of the outcome”.

Extracts from DVLA Drivers Medical Unit – progress report Apr 09

DVLA DRIVERS MEDICAL UNIT:

Background:

A workshop was held at DVLA, Swansea on 8 October 2008.

Proposal: DSA to devise a process for handling the growing number of DVLA medical referrals that cannot be determined **without** an on road assessment.

Approx Date	Activity/action	Completed	Document reference	Further action required
1 Apr 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slot required: Originally DVLA/DSA considered that a double test slot was required. However, we decided that we would trial using a single slot to see if would be feasible as D255 not required. • Examiner Training: We will start to roll this out as soon as possible. TU will be invited to Scotland. Dr. Watts and representatives/Driving Advisor from local mobility centre to attend Devon & Cornwall.	NO NO		The trial will provide insight as to slot length feasibility Waiting for T&A Decisions needed on who will deliver the DVLA Medical Appraisal

The Appraisal

- The appraisal will be conducted from a DSA site by a specially trained examiner
- The appraisal will last for approximately 38-40 minutes and covers various types of road and traffic conditions including motorways where possible
- The Assessor will look for a safe, competent drive over a route that encompasses a range of different hazards and is typical of what the driver may encounter everyday. Safety rather than method is assessed
- Driving skills will be highlighted in the comments, to help promote continued driver development and increase road safety awareness. The Assessor will look to establish an informal, supportive approach, to create the optimum environment for the driver to perform at his/her best
- The appraisal form identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses, focussing on all relevant aspects of the drive. The form is self-explanatory and identifies the overall standard achieved in each category
- A 'four band' approach to each category helps the driver (and DVLA) to understand how they performed by indicating the degree of weakness (if any) within specific areas of their driving ability. This information will be offered to the driver at the end of the appraisal drive by verbal debrief and will be recorded on the Driving Appraisal Report form. Both the driver and DVLA Drivers Medical Unit will receive a copy of the Appraisal Report
- The appraisal form and the examiner debrief is designed to be constructive and aid the driver to understand their performance and encourage the need for continual driver development
- These are the driving categories to be assessed:
 1. Knowledge and effective use of all controls
 2. Manoeuvring exercise using reverse gear
 3. Move off procedures
 4. Effective use of all mirrors in normal driving
 5. Correct and effective use of signals
 6. Response to traffic signals and traffic signs / road markings
 7. Road positioning
 8. Negotiating junctions and roundabouts
 9. Separation distance
 10. Appropriate speeds
 11. Display awareness, anticipation and planning skills
- Independent Driving. For a period of up to 10 minutes the driver will be asked to drive following either directional road signs, or following a series of instructions. During this period the driver will not be prompted to act on specific directional instruction, allowing the examiner to assess the driver's decision making ability. The form will be annotated that independent driving was demonstrated. Any weaknesses will be recorded as appropriately in one, or more of the areas above
- Eco-Safe driving. This is a recognised and proven style of driving that contributes to road safety whilst reducing fuel consumption and emissions. The driver will be assessed throughout the drive on their ability to apply eco-safe principles but this will not form part of the overall assessment.

The overall assessment mark or 'Band' will be awarded as follows:

- Band A** **Consistently safe and responsible driving**
- Band B** **Safe and responsible driving but with minor lapses - driver development beneficial**
- Band C** **One or more important lapses indicating driver development required to reach the minimum driving standard**
- Band D** **One or more dangerous action indicating driving is not safe**

Explanation of competencies

Knowledge and effective use of all controls

You must show that you can guide and control your vehicle safely and responsibly. To do this you will need to show that you understand and can operate the vehicle controls and instrumentation correctly.

Start, stop, move off procedures

Turn engine on safely using appropriate method. Whether on the level, a gradient or at an angle you should move off safely and under control. Stop safely and in an appropriate position. Use handbrake appropriately.

Effective use of mirrors

You must use the mirror, signal, manoeuvre (MSM) routine before signalling, changing direction and/or changing speed and show you are aware of what is happening around.

Correct and effective use of signals

You must show that you are considerate towards other road users. To do this you will need to show that you can communicate your intentions clearly and at the right time through using indicators and/or vehicle position, horn or lights as appropriate.

Response to traffic signals, traffic signs and road markings

You must show that you can respond to signs, signals and road markings in accordance with the Highway Code. To do this you will need to show that you can understand and comply with all traffic signals, signage, markings and traffic calming measures.

Road positioning

You must show that you are able to position the vehicle correctly and in a way that communicates your intentions when going ahead, turning right and left at junctions (including roundabouts). You should show you are able to judge speed and positioning on bends (e.g. type and condition of the road, severity of the bend, camber, visibility, weather conditions).

Negotiating junctions/slip roads (including roundabouts).

You should be able to judge the correct speed of approach, so that you can enter safely or stop if necessary. Respond appropriately to the level of risk posed and make sure that it is safe before proceeding.

Separation distance

You must be able to maintain a safe driving space at all times. You will need to show that you can allow for factors such as speed, traffic, weather and road conditions when choosing how much space to leave between yourself and other road users.

Appropriate speed

You will need to respond correctly to road signs and speed limits and show you are able to evaluate and adapt to different road and traffic conditions whilst making safe progress i.e. not becoming unduly hesitant or cautious, or driving too fast for the conditions.

Identify & Respond appropriately to Hazards:

You must show that you have good hazard awareness. You should plan your drive and be aware of other road users at all times. To do this you will need to show that you can identify hazards and respond appropriately given the level of risk posed. Take particular care to consider the actions of pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders.

Manoeuvring exercise

You should control the vehicle smoothly with reasonable accuracy ensuring safety and consideration for other road users

Extract from Competency and faults level definitions

DVLA Driver Medical Unit Appraisal Drives.

Competency levels for DVLA Driver Medical Unit Appraisal Drives in relation to the fault definitions and criteria required for the Category B official driving test.

A. Consistently safe and responsible driving

No faults at all, or:

Fault identified – not worthy (not worthy of recording).

- Any insignificant deviation from the defined outcome that does not compromise safety or can be a matter of finesse. For example – Dry steering, sequential gear changes, not pressing the button on top of the handbrake when applying it.

Fault identified – Driving Fault

- Low Risk - Any sufficient deviation from the defined outcome that does not compromise safety, or can be a matter of control - to justify a fault being recorded. However, minor lapse in competency area is an isolated instance allowing overall (or holistic) view of competency to still be assessed at level A.

B. Safe and responsible driving but with minor lapses – driver development beneficial

Fault identified – Driving Fault

- Low Risk - Any sufficient deviation from the defined outcome that does not compromise safety, or can be a matter of control - to justify a fault being recorded. A significant road safety critical single fault, and/or a number of minor lapses occurring within the competency area will result in level B rating.

It should be noted that for an overall result at level B driver development would be beneficial.

Sixteen or more driving faults (minor lapses) would result in failure of the Category B official driving test. Within the appraisal drive should a significantly large number (16 or more) minor lapses be committed, the overall assessment would be marked at level C and the reason explained in the comments box.

C. One or more important lapses indicating driver development required to reach the minimum driving standard

Fault identified – Serious fault (or lapse) - entails immediate failure of the Category B official driving test

There can however be occasions when **one specific** driving fault could by constant repetition, be regarded as a serious driving lapse and therefore a significant risk. For example, when a candidate habitually fails to take mirror observation when appropriate, or habitually displays lack of steering control, or is habitually unable to move away without stalling the engine.

A considerable number **(16 or more) driving faults** (minor lapses) committed, within any or all of the competency areas is sufficient to be considered a significant risk and will be regarded as a serious lapse.

- **Road Safety Risk - Significant deviation from the defined outcome with safety, control and/or legal requirement breached.**

NB: DVLA Medical Appraisal drives are not standard licence acquisition novice 'L' tests. During the appraisal drive an important lapse may occur within a competency area but the **overall** (or holistic) view of the drive may still be assessed at level **B** competence. However, the candidate should be aware that if the overall result is marked at level **C** competence driver development is recommended.

D. One or more dangerous action indicating driving is not safe

Fault identified – Dangerous fault – (entails immediate failure of the Category B official driving test)

- **High Road Safety Risk – Extreme deviation from the defined outcome with safety, control and/or legal requirement breached.**
- **Actual Danger - Safety, control and/or legal requirement breached that would have caused actual danger.** For example – the candidate did not take effective observation before emerging at the junction completely misjudged both speed and distance of an approaching vehicle. The examiner had to take appropriate action to avoid a collision.

Examiners, may have to take 'action' when it becomes necessary to do so in the interest of public safety, including their own and that of the candidate. Such intervention may be either verbal* or physical. An event may be marked **D** without the examiner taking action i.e. if another driver/road user has been forced to take evasive action.

Should any area be marked at **D** the **overall** (holistic) view of the drive will be viewed as compromising road safety to an unacceptable degree and will, therefore, be rated accordingly at level **D** indicating driving is not safe.

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***Verbal Guidance/Action**

Verbal guidance may be offered during a DVLA Medical Appraisal Drive and will not be considered as verbal 'action', given that the guidance offered was acted upon and remedied within the drive.

However, should the examiner state (comments box) that guidance had been offered but not acted upon, the specific competency area - and the **overall** result – would only achieve a maximum of level **C** competence. For example: 'Despite guidance candidate continued to drive too close to parked cars', or 'Despite guidance candidate continued throughout the drive to position vehicle too close to centre of road'

Verbal 'action' taken by the examiner in the interest of public safety will result in the specific competency being annotated at **D** - and for the **overall** assessment. (See **Actual Danger** above)

Extract from The driving Appraisal Report explained

The Driving Appraisal Report explained...

Competency Statements			
A Consistently safe and responsible driving	B Safe and responsible driving but with minor lapses - driver development beneficial	C One or more important lapses indicating driver Development required to reach the minimum driving standard	D One or more dangerous action indicating driving is not safe

EXPLANATION OF COMPETENCIES

Knowledge and effective use of all controls

You must show that you can guide and control your vehicle safely and responsibly. To do this you will need to show that you understand and can operate the vehicle controls and instrumentation correctly

Start, stop, move off procedures

Turn engine on safely using appropriate method. Whether on the level, a gradient or at an angle you should move off safely and under control. Stop safely and in an appropriate position. Use handbrake appropriately

Effective use of mirrors

You must use the mirror, signal, manoeuvre (MSM) routine before signalling, changing direction and/or changing speed and show you are aware of what is happening around

Correct and effective use of signals

You must show that you are considerate towards other road users. To do this you will need to show that you can communicate your intentions clearly and at the right time through using indicators and/or vehicle position, horn or lights as appropriate

Response to traffic signals, traffic signs and road markings

You must show that you can respond to signs, signals and road markings in accordance with the Highway Code. To do this you will need to show that you can understand and comply with all traffic signals, signage, markings and traffic calming measures

Road positioning

You must show that you are able to position the vehicle correctly and in a way that communicates your intentions when going ahead, turning right and left at junctions (including roundabouts). You should show you are able to judge speed and positioning on bends (e.g. type and condition of the road, severity of the bend, camber, visibility, weather conditions)

Negotiating junctions/slip roads (including roundabouts)

You should be able to judge the correct speed of approach, so that you can enter safely or stop if necessary. Respond appropriately to the level of risk posed and make sure that it is safe before proceeding

Separation distance

You must be able to maintain a safe driving space at all times. You will need to show that you can allow for factors such as speed, traffic, weather and road conditions when choosing how much space to leave between yourself and other road users

Appropriate speed

You will need to respond correctly to road signs and speed limits and show you are able to evaluate and adapt to different road and traffic conditions whilst making safe progress i.e. not becoming unduly hesitant or cautious, or driving too fast for the conditions

Identify & Respond appropriately to Hazards

You must show that you have good hazard awareness. You should plan your drive and be aware of other road users at all times. To do this you will need to show that you can identify hazards and respond appropriately given the level of risk posed. Take particular care to consider the actions of pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders

Manoeuvring exercises

You should control the vehicle smoothly with reasonable accuracy ensuring safety and consideration for other road users

Independent Driving

At some point during the drive, for a period of approximately 10 minutes, you will be given the opportunity to demonstrate how you drive independently. During the period of independent driving you will be assessed on the above competencies, wherever appropriate.

Eco-Safe Driving

This element does not contribute to the result of the appraisal. However, you should show that you recognise the principles of eco-safe driving, including appropriate use of the vehicle controls

DVLA – DMU Medical Referral Driver Appraisals

Observations/issues for discussion following meeting with * and team at North East Drive Mobility, Tyne & Wear on Tuesday 11 November 2008

The Driving Advisor – the DA role is far more encompassing and knowledge based than I, for whatever reason, had envisaged.

- DA must have 3 month induction period (pro-rata to hours worked)
- DA is expected to demonstrate core skills for road assessment (DSA/The Forum need to work together to ensure uniformity)
- DA is expected to continually develop – Mobility Centres offer CPD
- Working closely with the clinician.(all clients seen by both)
- Working constantly on cases building up knowledge and understanding
- Remedial tuition can be offered within assessment (Motability often refer)
- Contrary to my initial thoughts Mobility Centres only use trained DA – and do not employ outside ADIs
- DVLA assessment documentation states ‘the person conducting the test is appointed for that purpose and to report on the driving assessment to the Secretary of State’.
- What current status does this give the DA?
- Should we look into ‘delegated examiner’ status for the Forum Centre DA?

RISK: Can DSA provide DVLA the insight they require by delivering purely a driving assessment?
DSA are not qualified to provide ‘medical’ assessment, or conjecture

Extract from Outline and actions from initial meeting Oct 08

DVLA Driver's Medical Unit proposal for DSA to conduct medical referral on road assessments: (Full background information Annex A)

A meeting was held at DVLA on 8th October 2008 at DVLA, Swansea. The meeting was held as a workshop and views from all parties were encouraged and exchanged.

Current situation:

- Assessments, including the on road element, are currently being conducted by accredited members of the Forum of Mobility Centres
- DSA are conducting DVLA medical referral assessment drives in Scotland (estimated at 200 per annum) using the current 'L' test format

Proposal: DSA to devise a process for handling the growing number of DVLA medical referrals that cannot be determined **without** an on road assessment.

Currently an approximate 2,500 in England & Wales, 200 in Scotland per annum (and predicated future increases) fall into this category, for which there are currently long waiting lists.

It is viewed by DVLA that DSA are best placed to deliver on road assessments that are necessary for DVLA in helping them determine the outcome for certain types of medical referral, whilst the Forum of Mobility Centres are without doubt experts in the field of disability assessment and vehicle adaptation. * feels that the emphasis in the role of the Mobility Forums has shifted over the years and it is in the area of driver assessment that change is required.

Main reasons driving change:

- Road Safety – possibility of unfit drivers on the road and/or drivers with development needs not being identified
- Uniformity – standards nationally are uniform and fair
- Credibility – DSA are robust to legal challenge
- Customer Service – long waits for an on road assessment unfair on customer (and has road safety implications)
- Lifelong Learning – opportunity to work with stakeholders on continual driver development/older driver initiatives

There was understandable resistance from the executive board members of the Forum who viewed the initiative as detrimental to their business and perhaps as a slight on their professional ability to deliver on road assessments.

Additional concerns were that the driver would be put under pressure to 'take a driving test'. Both, *, DfT and *, DSA outlined future proposals connected to working within the competency framework and to link this proposal to Lifelong Learning and Older Driver initiatives. * said it would be possible to tailor an assessment to DVLA's needs, not dissimilar to that currently delivered for private hire mini cabs/taxis, fleet drivers etc.

A presentation was given by Forum board member, * outlining the current Forum assessment process.

- Interview
- Physical assessment
- Visual Assessment
- Static Rig Assessment
- Off road drive
- On road assessment

It was agreed DVLA, DSA and DfT will work closely with the Forum throughout the process.

Action Points: DSA to draft a proposal for delivering medical referral assessment drives. * agreed that she would look at this as a priority.

Outcome/action to date:

- Work in process - a first draft has been prepared, based around the existing assessment process for Occupational Driver Appraisal. Initial feedback from DVLA is the draft proposals appear to fit purpose.
- Already scheduled to be at Newcastle office, * is taking the opportunity to visit North East Drive Mobility Centre, Newcastle on Tuesday 11 November to see their assessment process first hand.

Annex A: Background notes (prepared by DVLA)

Drivers Medical Unit (DMU) has responsibility for assessing medical fitness to drive under the terms of the RTA 1988 and The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999.

At present some 650,000 cases are considered each year. Where medical enquiry confirms the medical fitness standards can be met, a licence is issued. Where the standards are not met, an application is refused or a licence revoked.

In a small number of complex cases it is not possible to make a decision based solely on medical reports. For these cases a practical assessment of driving safety is required. This is by means of an on road drive. The current options available are

1. A DSA test conducted as for a provisional licence holder with a declared disability,
2. An assessment at a Forum accredited centre.

Approximately 2,500 practical assessments were requested in England and Wales in the last 12 months. The number requested in Scotland is approximately 200 per year.

A recent improvement of our medical information gathering process has allowed more licensing decisions to be made on the basis on reports.

There remains a group of applicants and licence holders for whom a practical driving assessment is required. This group, who require a driving assessment in relation to their medical condition, is likely to increase.

There will be an increasing need for functionally based assessments of driving safety in the future. The UK has an ageing population. The percentage of people over 70 is increasing, of these an increasing number are over 85.

Mobility is recognised as a vital key to independence. There is much interest in the older driver and a recognition of the importance of driving in maintaining safe, personal mobility. The normal ageing process involves changing functional abilities; the assessment of these in relation to safe driving will become increasingly important.

With this in mind we wish work with colleagues currently involved in delivering practical driving testing and assessment to increase the type and number of practical driving assessments available.