

DRAFT

**MINUTES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT'S
HONORARY MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL
ON DRIVING AND VISUAL DISORDERS**

Thursday, 06th October 2016

Attendees

Mr A Viswanathan Chairman
Dr G Plant
Mr W D Newman
Professor A Lotery
Mr J Clarke
Dr T Eke

Lay Members

Mr D Edmunds
Mr T Smart

Ex-Officio

Dr G Rees Panel Secretary/Medical Adviser, DVLA
Miss N Davies Head of Drivers Medical Group
Mr Tim Venables MA Manager, Drivers
Mr D Thomas Senior Contract Manager, DVLA
Mr R Morgan Drivers Medical Contracts Team
Mr D Warren Medical Licensing Policy, DVLA
Mrs K Bevan Personal Assistant to Miss Nadine Davies, DVLA
Mr P Green Drivers Medical Service Designer
Mr B Neate Drivers Medical Service Designer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Ms Isabel Coe, Dr S Bell, Ms P Logan, Dr W Parry and Dr C Graham.

2. Minutes of Panel Meeting 17th March 2016

In agenda item 6 the term “Parkinson’s” should be replaced with “Parkinson syndrome”. Otherwise, the draft minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

3. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman mentioned that this year's meeting of Panel Chairmen had been postponed.

SECTION B: Ongoing topics for Further Discussion

4. Update on cases discussed at previous meeting

Panel was provided with an up-date on the three cases discussed at the previous meeting.

In one of these cases micro-perimetry has now been carried out. Panel noted that the results of this micro-perimetry closely reflect the findings of conventional automated Esterman perimetry. This information therefore supports the decision to revoke the driving licence in this case. Furthermore Panel, having seen the results of this additional test, were content that the original licensing decision was correct.

5. Update on DVLA vision-testing contract

Specsavers are returning on average **5,754** Reports a month which is an increase of **22%** on the same period last year and a **9%** increase in the overall average for 2015/16.

In 2016/17 Specsavers are returning on average **93%** of reports within 30 working days, this is down on the same period in 15/16 which averaged **96%**. This could be due to the **22%** increase in the first 5 months of referrals to Specsavers in 16/17.

In 2016/17 the average turnaround time is **17.5** days which is up from **15.4** in 15/16 which could also be due to the increase in reports of **22%** compared to the same period last year. Complaints have seen a similar level of increase to reports returned on the same period of last year at **24%**. When you compare the complaints against reports returned the level is still very low at **0.29%** which is the equivalent **3** complaints per **1000** licence holders. The total number of stores now live is 410, this is an improvement of 100 stores Since the start of the contract when we had 310 completing DVLA tests.

The coverage issues in Scotland have improved and there are now only a few areas that are still outside the 25 mile radius.

There are now 128 stores live with their electronic scanners, these are having a positive impact on turnaround times and should have figures to back this up by the end of November. The remaining stores will have their scanners up and running by the end of October.

As discussed, DVLA will look into possible mystery shopper exercises to audit stores performance, analysis is carried out on the complaints received to pick out any trends and particular stores.

DVLA also to look into revocation rates under Specsavers and under the previous arrangement with independent opticians.

6. Update on ‘Fitness to drive’ project

A demonstration was given of the current online service, taking a customer through the Glaucoma journey if notifying DVLA for the first time. An explanation was given on each page through the service, explaining the reasons why it had been set out the way it had and that this had been designed around user need.

An update was also given on what had been done so far in the project and what the future plans were.

Update included;

- Scheduled Public Beta date (12th October)
- Stats update (160 conditions now online)
- Explanation of the process and how a decision is made (process flows)
- Who DVLA have engaged with
- Rollout plan for further conditions

It was also agreed that DVLA would resend the link to their current prototype <https://fit2drive-ux.herokuapp.com>

7. Alternative to the number plate test

Panel noted that the requirement to read the standard vehicle registration mark (number plate) from 20 metres in good daylight is included in the Driving Regulations. There was discussion about alternatives to this. Panel considered that further research is required on this topic.

SECTION C: New Topics for Discussion

8. Keystone View Vision Screener

Panel discussed sensitivity to glare and the difficulties in measurement of this. Possible amendments to question 9 in the vision assessment part of the D4 medical examination form were discussed.

SECTION D:

9. Cases for Discussion

Panel discussed a total of five new cases. Each involved an individual with an ordinarily debarring binocular visual field defect and a request to be considered as an exceptional case.

In one of these cases the applicant had asserted that the reason for him failing the driving assessment was because he had not driven for some time beforehand. However, Panel stated that he had clearly failed the driving assessment because of the visual field defect and not because he was 'out of practice'. Such a failure would not be affected by 'rustiness'.

10. Other Updates

(i) Appeal cases since last Panel meeting

Panel was informed that since the last panel meeting DVLA has received 139 summonses against unfavourable licensing decisions, of which 14 were vision-related. No vision-related appeal had been upheld since the last meeting.

11. Any Other Business

Panel requested clarification with regard to (a) the section on monocularly and (b) the section on diplopia in the publication "Assessing fitness to drive – a guide for medical professionals". Panel was informed that DVLA will endeavour to clarify the guidelines for these conditions.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Vision Panel is scheduled for 9th March 2017

Dr Gareth B Rees

Panel Secretary

10th October 2016