

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

**Held on Monday, 9 October 2017
at Great Minster House,
33 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 4DR**

Present

Professor D Cunningham Owens Chair
Dr P J Connelly

Lay Members

Mr B Alexander

Ex-officio

Dr S Bell	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Miss N Davies	Head of Drivers Medical, DVLA
Dr W Parry	Senior Medical Doctor, DVLA
Dr A White	Panel Secretary, DVLA
Dr K Harrison	Medical Doctor, DVLA
Dr A Siekacz	Medical Doctor, DVLA
Mrs S Charles-Phillips	Business Change and Support, DVLA
Mrs R Toft	Medical Licensing Policy, DVLA
Mrs K Bevan	PA to Head of Drivers Medical, DVLA
Mrs S Taylor	Medical Panel Support

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Professor S Banerjee, Dr T Beanland, Dr P Fearon, Dr S Bell, Dr T Jagathesan, Dr C Graham.

2. Minutes of last meeting 27 March 2017

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and duly signed by the chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 27 March 2017

Matters arising from the minutes were dealt with under the headings below

4. Recruitment Update

The Panel was provided with an update on recruitment by DVLA, there was a discussion about the problems of recruitment to Panels in general and to the Psychiatry Panel in particular. There was discussion regarding the areas of expertise required, these included learning disability, neuro-psychiatry and personality disorders along with the sub-specialities already identified, for example forensic psychiatry, liaison psychiatry and psycho-pharmacology.

Panel requested clarification and refinement of the advice provided in the Terms and Conditions of Service around the level of GMC registration and licensing required for Panel membership.

5. Future Direction of Panel

The Panel discussed at length the future direction of the Psychiatry Panel. In particular the proposal that the adult general psychiatry portion of the Panel's work could be incorporated into the Alcohol and Drug Panel. A wide ranging discussion took place covering areas of concern around this proposal.

A concern raised was that general mental health problems form a significant proportion of ill health within society and are dealt with largely at the community level and by general psychiatrists rather than those specialising in substance misuse, who by definition deal with a very specialised subset of the population with mental health issues.

Panel discussed the increasing number of drivers identified with problems with dementia or cognitive impairment. Numbers have increased since 2016, possibly related to the post war boom renewing licences at age 70

No decision was made about the future of the Panel.

6. Medical Standards Review

The Panel discussed the current standards; no changes were advised to the current published standards. It was acknowledged that the standards had evolved over the course of many years and had achieved a degree of stability. Some suggestions were made to improving the end user experience of the current enquiry forms, some

minor changes to the content of the enquiry forms was suggested to align them with the AFTD.

7. Cognitive Impairment and dementia guidelines

A brief update on the progress of the Newcastle Group was presented to the Panel. Publication is expected in the near future. DVLA will provide a contribution to the Royal College of Psychiatry Congress in June 2018.

8. Update of the annual Chair meeting, 14 July 2017

Panel was provided with a report from the annual Chair meeting held at DVLA in Swansea. Updates were provided regarding the changes to GMC advice to doctors regarding driving. As a result of this discussion panel members expressed some concerns over the level of training on advice regarding fitness to drive in undergraduate and post graduate training.

9. Case discussion – Psychosis and Group 2 Licensing.

A case was discussed involving Group 2 licensing and psychosis. The points for discussion firstly involved the difficulty in obtaining specialist opinions and reports involving driving fitness. There has been an increasing reluctance to complete requests for information on patients by those involved in their care, various reasons have been given. Panel expressed their concerns around this development and stressed the public health role of medical colleagues.

Panel was reminded that unless medical enquiry can demonstrate on the balance of probability that a driver was unsafe to drive then a licence must be issued. The reluctance to provide information will affect the ability to make a licensing decision, Panel advised that these consequences may need to be explained fully.

Secondly, Panel have reiterated that the standards require 12 months good mental health before Group 2 licensing. This would allow time for treatment and an observation period including significant potential anniversary triggers. It was explained that this period does not equate to 12 months 'off the road' or 12 months since admission or revocation of a licence. It means that the driver has attained 12 months of good health in recovery from the illness, potentially this could well require significantly longer than 12 months not driving. Of course, cases may be considered individually.

10. Research Update

There was no research update

11. Any Other Business

There was no further business to discuss

12. Date for next meeting

Provisionally Tuesday 13th March 2018

**Original Draft Minutes prepared by: DR A M White MB BCh
Panel Secretary**

Date: 11th October 2017

**Final Minutes signed off by: Professor D Cunningham Owens
Chairman**

Date: 2nd January 2018