



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

Meeting held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 11:00am

## **Present:**

## **Panel Members:**

Professor A Viswanathan (Panel Chair)

Mr. T Eke

Professor A Lotery

Professor R Anderson

Mr. J Clarke

Dr J Durnian

Mr. W D Newman

Dr G Plant

Dr L Southee (Lay Member)

## **OBSERVERS:**

Mr. I Pearce

Dr S Bell

Dr C Graham

Dr F Kearns

Director of Clinical Eye Research Centre, Liverpool  
Chief Medical Officer, Maritime and Coastguard Agency  
Occupational Health Service, Northern Ireland  
National Programme office for Traffic Medicine, Ireland

## **EX-OFFICIO:**

Dr N Jenkins

Dr M Debritto

Dr A Stapley

Mrs. C Hughes

Mrs. G Devonald

Mr. David Evans

Mrs. Lorraine Jones

Mrs. Suzanne Richards

Mrs. Siân Taylor

Senior Doctor, DVLA

DVLA, Doctor

DVLA, Doctor

Driver Licensing Policy, DVLA

Driver Licensing Policy, DVLA

Operational Delivery & Support Drivers Medical, DVLA

Panel Coordinator, Drivers Medical, DVLA

Drivers Service Management, DVLA

DVLA Note Taker

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## SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from;

Ms. M Karp (Lay Member)

### **2. CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed panel members. This is the first meeting of this Panel conducted digitally and the Chair invited feedback. Panel Chair advised attendees regarding the etiquette of digital meetings.

### **3. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

There were no actions carried over from the last meeting.

## SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

### **4. Covid Recovery, DVLA Update**

DVLA provided an update on the impact that COVID 19 has had on the Agency and temporary changes that had been made to legislation to ensure that drivers stay mobile.

The Senior DVLA Doctor advised Panel of the challenges specific to vision cases resulting from the COVID 19 situation, particularly the lack of access to visual field and visual acuity testing and DVSA number plate tests. Panel advised that Esterman visual field testing remained the recommended assessment tool and that there were no suitable alternatives. DVLA advised that referrals to Specsavers had recommenced 5 October 2020. The Panel suggested that the Association of Optometrists might help identify additional sourcing of visual field tests should it be necessary.

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## **5. Best Practice Guidelines, Nick Jenkins to update**

The Senior DVLA Doctor provided information to the Panel about the purpose of DVLA's Best Practice Guidelines (BPG), which is a document that is used internally and provides operational guidance for DVLA doctors and caseworkers about various medical conditions. Dr T Eke and Dr G Rees provided panel with a reviewed draft of the Vision chapter in the BPG guidance, which was previously discussed at the Spring Panel meeting.

Panel congratulated Dr T Eke and Dr G Rees on their work to date. The Senior DVLA Doctor will continue to liaise with Dr Eke to progress this work and it is envisaged that the final document will comprise of a number of chapters.

Panel suggested that the introduction of meetings held via videoconference, may present opportunities for panel members to engage more frequently with DVLA Doctors to discuss difficult cases. DVLA agreed that there may be benefits to this and will consider this further.

## **SECTION C: ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS**

## **6. Tests, horizon scanning, research and literature**

DVLA reminded all panel members as part of the terms and conditions of the requirement to update panel about any information/tests/research that could impact on standards or existing processes.

## **7. AOB**

Panel discussed the use of mobility scooters and confirmed that there is advice available on GOV.UK regarding the recommended vision requirements to drive these vehicles. The discussion then turned to the use of E-scooters and the recent pilot that is being run across the country. Panel confirmed holders of valid provisional and full driving licences, must meet the minimum eyesight standards.

The Senior DVLA Doctor advised that Professor A Viswanathan was retiring as panel chair and this was his last panel meeting. The Senior Doctor expressed both DVLA's and Panel's appreciation of Professor Viswanathan's long association with Panel and the achievements made during his tenure as Panel Chair. Panel thanked him for his enormous contribution to road safety.

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**8. Date and time of next meeting**

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Original draft minutes prepared by:**

**Siân Taylor  
Note Taker  
Date: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**Final minutes signed off by:**

**Professor A Viswanathan  
Panel Chair  
Date: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**THE DVLA WILL CONSIDER THE ADVICE PROVIDED BY THE PANEL  
AND NO CHANGES TO STANDARDS WILL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL THE  
IMPACT ON INDIVIDUALS AND ROAD SAFETY IS FULLY ASSESSED.**

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