



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

Meeting held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 10:00am

## **Present:**

### **Panel Members:**

Mr William Newman (Chair)  
Dr Gordon Plant  
Mr Jonathan Durnian  
Mr Jonathan Clarke  
Mr Tom Eke  
Professor Andrew Lotery  
Professor Roger Anderson  
Dr Lucille Southee (Lay Member)  
Mrs Miriam Karp (Lay Member)

### **OBSERVERS:**

Dr Sally Bell	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Mr Ian Pearce	Royal College of Ophthalmologists
Dr Fiona Kearns	National Programme Office for Traffic Medicine, Ireland

### **Guests:**

Miss Kay Asuni	Department for Transport
Mrs Karen Farr	Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
Mr Mark Magee	Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
Mr Nigel Prince	Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

### **EX-OFFICIO:**

Dr Nick Jenkins	Senior DVLA Doctor
Dr Benjamin Wiles	DVLA Doctor
Dr Sandeep Gwinnet	DVLA Doctor
Mr Jason Donovan	Head of Driver Licensing Policy
Miss Keya Nicholas	Driver Licensing Policy Lead
Mrs Claire Hughes	Driver Licensing Policy
Mr Michael Jones	Driver Licensing Policy
Mrs Suzanne Richards	Drivers Service Management
Mrs Sharon Abbott	Operational Delivery & Support, Drivers Medical
Mrs. Siân Taylor	DVLA Panel Co-ordinator & Panel Note Taker
Miss Kirsty-Leigh Van Staden	DVLA Panel Coordinator Support
Miss Katy Richards	DVLA Panel Coordinator Support
Mrs Jemma Avo	DVLA Panel Coordinator Support

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## SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

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

Apologies were received from:

Miss Catherine Mottram, Department for Transport  
Dr Colin Graham, National Programme Office for Traffic Medicine, Ireland

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

The panel chair welcomed attendees and advised of the meeting etiquette. The attendees are invited to introduce themselves.

### **3. MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

There were no previous actions carried over from the previous panel meeting

## SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

### **4. Paroxysmal Diplopia**

Doctor Gordon Plant provided a presentation on paroxysmal diplopia. Panel thanked Dr Plant for an interesting presentation.

Panel discussed diplopia and the current published medical standards. Panel agreed that a review of the internal DVLA Doctors' operational guidance should be undertaken and that this should then be followed by a review of the published medical standards for diplopia.

### **5. Implications of research on the relationship between visual impairment and road safety**

In July 2019, The Department of Transport (DfT) published a refreshed road safety statement and two-year action plan to address road safety issues throughout the lifetime of road users. DfT have since commissioned more research on the impact of visual impairment on road safety. DfT shared the draft report with panel members and provided a summary of their findings. Panel requested that they be sighted on the final report when it is published.

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## **6. Bioptics**

The Panel have previously considered the use of bioptic devices for driving in previous meetings. Panel advised that while they understand the desire to enhance the independent mobility of people with reduced visual ability, there is currently insufficient information regarding the safety of using bioptic devices for driving, in Great Britain. Panel advised that there should be no change to the current guidance but agreed to review further evidence.

## **7. Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency, Proposal for Panel Review – Digital Eyesight Assessment**

Before a practical driving test is undertaken, candidates must satisfy the person conducting the test that they can read in good daylight (with the aid of corrective lenses if worn) a registration mark fixed to a motor vehicle at a distance of 20 metres. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) provided panel with a presentation outlining the recent research they have undertaken to develop a digital alternative to the number plate test, that will also fully satisfy the visual acuity standards. DVSA provided panel with a summary of the issues they faced in administering driving tests, particularly when atmospheric conditions or lighting does not allow for the normal test to take place. DVSA proposed the use of a digital application that can replicate the number plate requirement for good daylight.

Panel was supportive of DVSA's proposal and requested that they continue to build the evidence base to support any future changes.

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

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

DVLA reminded all panel members as part of the Terms and Conditions of their obligations to update panel about any information/tests/research that could impact on standards or existing operational processes.

Panel discussed research requirements and DVLA agreed to have further discussions of how future research can be commissioned in relation to visual disorders and driving. Panel also discussed what transport may look like in the next ten years, especially with new technology and autonomous vehicles.

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**9. AOB**

There was no other business discussed.

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

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October.

**Original draft minutes prepared by:**

**Siân Taylor  
Note Taker  
Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021**

**Final minutes signed off by:**

**Panel Chair  
Mr William Newman  
Date: 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**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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