



MINUTES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT'S
HONORARY MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL ON DRIVING AND DISORDERS
OF THE CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM
Meeting held on Thursday 7th October 2021 10:00 am

Present:

Panel Members:

Dr Robert Henderson (Chair)
Dr Leisa J Freeman
Mr Andrew Goodwin
Dr Sern Lim
Dr Shahid Aziz
Dr Kim Rajappan
Mr Amar Vara (Lay member)
Mrs Linda Samuels (Lay member)

OBSERVERS:

Dr Sally Bell	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Dr Colin Graham	Director Occupational Health Service, Northern Ireland
Dr Ewan Hutchinson	Civil Aviation Authority
Dr Derek Crinion	National Programme Office for Traffic Medicine, Ireland

EX-OFFICIO:

Dr Nick Jenkins	Senior DVLA Doctor
Dr Judith Morgan	DVLA Doctor
Dr Donald Harrison	DVLA Doctor
Dr Anca Birliga	DVLA Doctor
Dr Aditi Kumar	DVLA Doctor
Miss Keya Nicholas	Driver Medical Licensing Policy Lead
Mr Dewi Richards	Driver Medical Licensing Policy
Mrs Helen Harris	Driver Medical Licensing Policy
Miss Gwen Owen	Driver Medical Licensing Policy
Mrs Suzanne Richards	DVLA Service Management
Miss Kimberley Brannigan	Drivers Medical Operational Delivery & Support
Miss Kirsty-Leigh Van Staden	DVLA Panel Support
Miss Sarah Anthony	DVLA Panel Support
Mrs Siân Taylor	DVLA Panel Coordinator/PA Senior DVLA Doctor

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Dr Douglas Fraser

Consultant Cardiologist

2. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all attendees and advised attendees regarding the etiquette of digital meetings. The Chair reminded members to ensure their declarations of interest were up to date.

The Chair updated panel on items discussed at the Panel Chairs' meeting held in June 2021 and how these meetings will be held going forward. The Chair discussed panel membership in preparation for the next round of panel recruitment where a number of vacancies for specialist subject matter experts were identified. DVLA advised on plans for the induction of new members and the current process for recruitment campaigns.

3. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Panel Chair discussed the actions from the last meeting with panel:

i. Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Agenda item 9.

ii. Aortic Dissection

Agenda item 10.

SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

4. COVID 19 Recovery, DVLA Update

DVLA provided panel with an update on the current backlog situation at the Agency because of the pandemic. DVLA confirmed that they have implemented several changes to support their recovery including:

- 13 Month driving licence entitlement extension
- D4 Waiver Scheme
- Online consultations specific to Group 2 drivers with diabetes
- New accommodation
- Web-chat System to enable staff working from home to answer simple queries, reducing further calls to the contact centre
- Changes to GOV.UK to direct drivers to the online Fitness to Drive channel

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DVLA explained that the focus is to reduce the current backlogs and the burden on NHS doctors. To do this DVLA has piloted a simplified renewal process for car and motorcycle drivers with epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis and more recently some mental health conditions. In addition to this, DVLA have also been working on:

- An electronic facility for secure email addresses to allow doctors to email medical questionnaires
- Extending the “Notify” function for drivers on receipt of a medical notification/renewal to let them know their application/notification has been received
- New modernised casework system
- Recruitment of 116 additional caseworkers to process medical cases

5. Loss of consciousness/awareness standards

A presentation was given by Dr Kim Rajappan detailing current AFTD guidance, statistics and possible change suggestions. Panel thanked Dr Rajappan for the presentation. Panel discussed the possible structure of the revised standards and reviewed current international standards.

Panel noted that the working group of panel chair and members, and DVLA Senior Doctor would continue to deliberate and a draft document would be circulated before the Spring meeting.

6. Pacemaker

DVLA provided background on the medical licensing proposal which involves removing the requirement for drivers to notify DVLA of a pacemaker implantation. Panel discussed this proposal.

DVLA asked panel to consider if there is evidence to demonstrate the advancement and reliability of pacemaker devices and should this evidence exist, whether DVLA still require notifications of pacemaker implantations for Group 1 (car and motorcycle drivers)

Panel were supportive of this proposal and advised that a law change could be progressed for Group 1 drivers (including CRT-P devices). DVLA advised that they would continue to gather evidence to inform the impact assessment and policy options and would continue to feedback progress to the panel.

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7. Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator ICD

The medical standards for fitness to drive state that should an ICD be implanted (even if it is deactivated) this is debarring for Group 2 licensing purposes.

Panel were asked to consider whether such cases could be considered as an exceptional case for Group 2 licensing.

Panel advised that such cases should be considered on an individual basis by obtaining panel member opinion. The need to clarify the legal position of such a recommendation was noted.

SECTION C: ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS

8. Marfan Syndrome

Panel had previously agreed they should have further discussions regarding Marfan Syndrome, particularly to review the rationale for debarring Group 2 drivers who have undergone emergency aortic root surgery.

Panel agreed to consider amended wording in which would be presented at the Spring panel meeting.

9. Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

DVLA advised that following the Panel meeting in March 2020, the wording of the Group 2 standard was agreed and had since been updated in the AFTD guidance. Previously the medical standard required a specified rise in blood pressure during an exercise test. The standard no longer requires this blood pressure response but requires completion of the full nine minutes of the Bruce exercise treadmill protocol. If the individual is unable to complete a functional exercise test, then an alternative would be to undertake an MRI scan to assess the extent of gadolinium enhancement.

DVLA asked panel to discuss whether clarification of the wording of Annex C of AFTD was required.

Panel advised that any ST segment changes which were exercise-induced, whether there be pre-existing baseline changes or not, could not be interpreted or afforded significance. DVLA agreed to amend the relevant guidance and forward to the Panel Chair for approval.

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10. Aortic Dissection/Aneurysm

In the previous panel meeting, panel discussed the medical standard regarding chronic aortic dissection. DVLA asked the panel's advice regarding the wording of the standard.

Panel discussed standards for aortic aneurysm and advised that a maximal aortic diameter of 5.5cm should apply for Group 2 licensing, with separate standards for bicuspid aortopathy and Marfan's syndrome. The standard with regards to non-operative management was discussed and amendments suggested. The amendments will be forwarded to the Chair for approval.

11. Tests, horizon scanning, research and literature

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

There were no items for discussion

12. AOB

There were no items for discussion.

13. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 10th March 2022

Original draft minutes prepared by:

Sian Taylor
Note Taker
Date: 07th October 2021

Final minutes signed off by:

Dr R Henderson
Chairperson
Date: 25th October 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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