



MINUTES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT'S  
HONORARY MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL ON ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND  
SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND DRIVING  
Meeting held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 11:00am

**Present:**

**Panel Members:**

Professor Eilish Gilvarry (Chair)  
Dr Richard J Aspinall  
Dr Jane Marshall  
Dr Edward Day  
Dr Robert Searle  
Dr David Fox  
Mr Abdul Elghedafi (Lay Member)  
Miss Sarah Oldham (Lay Member)

**OBSERVERS:**

Professor Denis Cusack  
Dr Ed Bebb

Director, Irish Medical Bureau of Road Safety  
Head of Health and Wellbeing, Rail Safety & Standards Board

**EX-OFFICIO:**

Dr Nick Jenkins  
Dr Amanda Edgeworth  
Dr Jeannette Lynch  
Mrs Keya Nicholas  
Mr David Snelling  
Miss Gwen Owen  
Mr Andrew Harper  
Mr Richard Phillips  
Miss Kirsty Leigh Van Staden  
Mrs Siân Taylor

Senior DVLA Doctor  
DVLA Doctor  
DVLA Doctor  
Driver Licensing Policy Lead  
Road Safety Division, Department for Transport  
Driver Licensing Policy  
Driver Licensing Policy  
Drivers Medical Operational Delivery & Support  
DVLA Panel Coordination Team  
DVLA Panel Coordinator/PA to the Senior DVLA Doctor

**Important:** These advisory notes represent the balanced judgement of the Secretary of State's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel as a whole. If they are quoted, they should be reproduced as such and not as the views of individual Panel members.



## SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

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

Apologies were received from,

Dr Stephen Morley	Consultant in Chemical Pathology
Dr John McVicker	Occupational Health Service, Northern Ireland
Dr Ewan Hutchinson	Civil Aviation Authority
Dr Sue Stannard	Chief Medical Advisor Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Ms Hayley Sergeant	Service Management
Dr Michael Trudgill	Civil Aviation Authority

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

The Chair welcomed panel members and advised attendees regarding the etiquette of digital meetings. Panel members introduced themselves and the meeting commenced. The panel chair discussed the benefits of digital and face to face meeting – panel agreed a digital meeting once a year.

### **3. Actions/Matters arising from the Previous Meeting**

#### **i. Medicinal Cannabis/Recreational Cannabis**

DVLA advised that panel had previously requested an annual review of this topic. DFT provided an update – See agenda item 4.

#### **ii. Persistent Alcohol Misuse Definition**

Extraordinary meetings were held on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022 to clarify the definition of persistent misuse in the Assessing Fitness to Drive (AFTD) guidance. See agenda item 6.

#### **iii. Polysubstance Misuse**

Panel advised that they would be pleased to continue to discuss cases brought to the meeting by DVLA. Such discussions allow for the formulation of the general principles to be applied to cases involving polysubstance misuse.

**Important:** These advisory notes represent the balanced judgement of the Secretary of State's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel as a whole. If they are quoted, they should be reproduced as such and not as the views of individual Panel members.



## SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

### 4. Department for Transport (DFT) Update

DFT outlined recent activity: The call for evidence on drug driving has closed and officials are evaluating responses before making recommendations to Ministers. In relation to the promised Call for Evidence on motoring offences, we are considering how best to proceed with it.

Panel thanked DFT for the update. Panel agreed this was ongoing discussion and requested the item continued to be reviewed on an annual basis.

### 5. DVLA Update

Mr Richard Phillips, Operational Leader in Complex Casework, provided a DVLA update on behalf of Tim Burton, Head of Drivers Medical.

The Drivers Medical overall operational position and customer service continues to improve. There has been a huge amount of work done across the Agency to support operational recovery.

DVLA has recruited and trained over 400 Drivers Medical colleagues across three operational sites. DVLA has delivered two new customer service centres in Swansea and Birmingham. Customer service centre colleagues are being trained in both telephony and Drivers Medical casework.

DVLA has also developed new and innovative ways of working such as introducing a simplified renewal process for those drivers who hold a short period driving licence and changing the law to allow other registered healthcare professionals to be authorised to complete DVLA medical questionnaires. Drivers Medical has made significant operational progress and are reducing the volume of customer cases in progress week on week.

Panel thanked DVLA for the update.

DVLA provided an update on Short Period Licensing (SPL) which, since the previous meeting, has now extended to include further conditions. DVLA advised that quality assurance of the trial had provided very good results regarding the process for both mental health conditions and for glaucoma. The results will be further considered within the Agency with a view to determining next steps.

DVLA presented the results on the “Short Period Licensing” trial undertaken for chronic neurological conditions, psychiatric conditions and glaucoma and requested panel’s opinion regarding the possibility of undertaking such a trial in alcohol-related cases. Panel were supportive of the concept of the process of re-licensing applicants from their self-declaration. Panel asked DVLA to retrospectively assess customers’ self-declared alcohol intake vs.

**Important:** These advisory notes represent the balanced judgement of the Secretary of State’s Honorary Medical Advisory Panel as a whole. If they are quoted, they should be reproduced as such and not as the views of individual Panel members.



subsequent CDT result in a sample of cases whereby the medical standard of alcohol dependence was applied, and the customer was applying to renew a one-year licence.

Panel agreed that the SPL process was a positive step forward in improving the medical licensing process. Panel advised DVLA to collate data on repeat offenders and to cross reference with their self-declarations.

Panel recommended, that if customers are given a one-year licence initially on return after twelve months they should be given a longer licence if they show abstinence. Panel asked DVLA for figures before the trial is started. Panel suggested to DVLA if the dependency figures are low in customers renewing their licence and the figures are encouraging, then a longer duration licence should be issued.

## 6. Persistent Alcohol Misuse Definition

DVLA and the panel Chair provided an update from a working group established following the Autumn 2021 panel meeting:

The group had met on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

Panel discussed:

- The definition of persistent alcohol misuse and agreed that it should be aligned to “Harmful pattern of substance misuse” as defined in ICD-11
- The proposed process by which such cases should be managed by DVLA. This included as assessment of risk to categorise those at high risk and those at lesser risk
- The risk assessment process and proposed assessment tool
- Details of the proposed management of those cases considered to be at lesser risk

The discussion concluded with a summary of actions going forward for DVLA and attendees:

- DVLA to undertake an internal pilot of the risk assessment tool
- Once the tool is agreed the first and second series medical questionnaires will require amending in order to capture the evidence required by the risk assessment tool
- DVLA to bring outcomes to the panel meeting in Spring 2023
- Panel will consider wording of the proposed brief intervention letter

**Important:** These advisory notes represent the balanced judgement of the Secretary of State's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel as a whole. If they are quoted, they should be reproduced as such and not as the views of individual Panel members.



## SECTION C: ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS

### **7. Appeals Data**

Between 15<sup>th</sup> February and 20<sup>th</sup> September, the number of appeals received was 262. 96 cases were Alcohol and Drug related; 1 case was upheld.

### **8. AOB**

- DVLA discussed an historic case.
- Policy provided an update on panel member recruitment.
- DVLA discussed the proposed changes to AFTD concerning high risk offenders and alcohol induced seizures.

### **9. Tests, Horizon Scanning, Research and Literature**

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

### **10. Time and Date of next meeting**

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Original draft minutes prepared by:**

**Sian Taylor**

**Note Taker**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Final minutes signed off by:**

**Professor E Gilvarry**

**Panel Chair**

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**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.**

**Important:** These advisory notes represent the balanced judgement of the Secretary of State's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel as a whole. If they are quoted, they should be reproduced as such and not as the views of individual Panel members.