



MINUTES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT'S
HONORARY MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL ON DRIVING AND DIABETES
MELLITUS

Meeting held on Tuesday 24th October 2023

Present:

Panel Members:

Professor Mark Evans (Chair)
Professor Pratik Choudhary
Professor Jeffrey Stephens
Professor David Russell-Jones
Dr Sufyan Hussain
Mr William Wright (Lay Member)
Dr Peter Rogers (Lay Member)

OBSERVERS:

Dr Sue Stannard Chief Medical Advisor, Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Dr Ewan Hutchinson Civil Aviation Authority

EX-OFFICIO:

Dr Nick Jenkins Senior DVLA Doctor
Dr Aditi Kumar DVLA Doctor
Mrs Keya Nicholas Driver Licensing Policy Lead
Mr Leigh A Bromfield Driver Licensing Policy
Mrs Helen Harris Driver Licensing Policy
Mrs Julie Bartlett Driver Licensing Policy
Ms. Emma Lewis Driver Licensing Policy
Mr Dewi Richards Driver Licensing Policy
Mr Richard Davies Service Management
Miss Danielle Theophilus Service Management
Mr David George Business & Customer Support
Mrs Siân Taylor DVLA Panel Coordinator/PA to the Senior DVLA Doctor

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Mr Samuel Barnard	Paediatric Diabetes Specialist Nurse
Dr Karen Tait	Consultant Diabetologist
Dr Parijat De	Consultant Physician in Diabetes

2. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Panel Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded attendees of meeting etiquette. Additionally, the Chair prompted panel members to update their declarations of interest.

3. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

i. Independent Diabetologists Forum

The first meeting was held on 19th April 2023 with DVLA's network of independent diabetologists, responsible for conducting annual medical assessments for Group 2 drivers with insulin-treated diabetes. The panel Chair regarded the meeting as a success and advised that the forum should not only improve the consistency of Group 2 assessment reports but also offers assessors a platform to address any queries and facilitates updates to working procedures, both for assessors and DVLA. It was unanimously agreed to hold regular meetings going forward.

SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Driver Licencing Policy Update

i. Continuous Glucose Monitoring Systems (CGMS) for bus and lorry (Group 2) drivers

DVLA provided an update on the forthcoming proposed consultation for CGMS for Group 2 drivers. DVLA advised that the consultation documents have been drafted and are currently in the process of obtaining the necessary clearances. The exact launch date for the consultation is yet to be confirmed.

The consultation aims to explore the use of CGMS Group 2 drivers in conjunction with finger prick testing. Additionally, it will also seek to assess the possibility of expanding the definition of full hypoglycaemic awareness, to include awareness through electronic means. Panel recommended that if CGMS is approved for Group 2 driving, it will necessitate a review of the current Group 2 application process.

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ii. Call for Evidence (CFE)

On the 31st July, DVLA launched a call for evidence for drivers with medical conditions. Evidence was gathered from health and other experts across organisations to assist DVLA in reviewing the current legislative framework that underpins the existing processes for medical driving licences.

The call for evidence concluded on the 22nd of October 2023. The responses will be analysed to identify areas where policy or legislative changes could potentially improve outcomes for drivers and other road users. The call for evidence closed on the 22nd of October 2023.

iii. Panel Recruitment

DVLA policy advised that the recent panel Chair recruitment process has been successfully finalised. Recommendations for appointments will be submitted for ministerial approval.

5. Activity Forecast

To assist DVLA in planning for future activity forecasts, panel members were asked if they could provide insights on potential trends in the prevalence of individuals with diabetes treated either with insulin or with medication associated with a risk of hypoglycaemia.

Panel discussed three key points:

The first point emphasised the growing incidence of Type 2 diabetes diagnoses, in young individuals, potentially leading to a lifelong dependence on insulin. The Panel advised that this data is available through National Diabetes Audit (NDA)¹.

Secondly, the number of individuals treated with insulin was discussed. Unfortunately, the current data is likely to be misleading due to challenges in the supply chain for obtaining GLP-1 medication, potentially resulting in an increase in insulin prescriptions. However, data trends could become more reliable for making future predictions over the next 18 months, once supply chains have returned to their usual state.

Thirdly, the panel discussed various insulin regimens and their potential influence on driving and the occurrence of hypoglycaemia. Including, the question of whether advancements in insulin treatment should prompt a review of standards for individuals using insulin, particularly in terms of identifying subgroups that may pose lower risks when driving. The Panel advised that driving licensing regulations should not be overcomplicated and that no immediate action is recommended.

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The Chair requested that panel members reflect on the topics discussed and, if they identify any additional research areas, these could be addressed in forthcoming meetings.

DVLA thanked panel for their advice.

SECTION C: ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS

6. Tests, horizon scanning, research, and literature

DVLA reminded all panel members as stipulated in the terms and conditions of the obligation to keep the panel updated on any information/tests/research that could have an impact on the existing processes and standards.

The Panel discussed future technologies such as driverless vehicles and continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) readers integrated into vehicles before ignition. The Panel advised that these are topics to be continuously considered and kept at the forefront of our thoughts.

7. AOB

Discussion paper – Vocational drivers renewal requirements

Previous medical research associated age and significant medical conditions that might impact safe driving in the mid-forties. This rationale underlies the current requirements for vocational drivers to undergo a medical assessment, every 5 years from the age of 45 and annually from the age of 65.

Notably, the UK is in a minority of European countries that mandates the annual renewal of a vocational licence as drivers age.

The Panel were asked to provide their perspective on whether they thought these requirements should be retained and to assess if any recent research could present evidence for a healthier older population, thereby advocating a modification in the licencing renewal criteria.

Following an extensive discussion, the Panel favoured the consideration of extending the age requirement, but they also acknowledged that additional research will be necessary before any adjustments are made.

Panel Chair

DVLA and the Panel expressed their gratitude to the outgoing Chair for the work and commitment provided during his tenure as a panel member and subsequently, as the panel Chair.

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8. Date and Time of next meeting

Tuesday 26th March 2024

Original draft minutes prepared by:

Siân Taylor

Note Taker

Date: 24th October 2023

Final minutes signed off by:

Professor Mark Evans

Panel Chair

Date: 30/10/23

**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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