



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

Meeting held on Wednesday 12th March 2024

Present:

Panel Members:

Professor Robert Howard (Interim Chair)	Professor of Old Age Psychiatry
Dr Abrar Ibrahim	General Practitioner
Dr Daniel Dalton	Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist
Dr Nicholas Woodthorpe	Consultant Psychiatrist
Mr Nikhil Gokani	Lay member
Mr Anthony Arcari	Lay member

EX-OFFICIO:

Dr Nick Jenkins	Senior DVLA Doctor
Dr Clair Fang	DVLA Doctor
Mr Leigh Andrew Bromfield	Driver Licensing Policy Lead
Ms Emma Lewis	Driver Licensing Policy
Mr Michael Jones	Driver Licensing Policy
Mrs Karen Hughes	Driver Licensing Policy
Mr Jamie Ward	Senior Lead, Drivers Medical Business Support and Change
Mr Richard Davies	Service Management
Miss Danielle Theophilus	Service Management
Mr Iain McTaggart	Service Management
Mrs Siân Taylor	DVLA Panel Coordinator/PA to the Senior DVLA Doctor

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Dr Mary Fisher – Morris	Chartered Psychologist
Dr Tania Jagathesan	Civil Aviation Authority
Dr Edd Bebb	Professional Head of Health and Wellbeing RSSB
Dr Sue Stannard	Chief Medical Advisor, Maritime and Coastguard Agency

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2. CHAIR'S REMARKS

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

3. ACTIONS/MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

GPS navigation on assistance improves driving mobility in older drivers.
Dr Mary Fisher-Morris provided a written update in her absence.

SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Panel Recruitment Update

Driver licensing policy provided a panel recruitment update, 4 new Panel Chairs have been recruited, 8 expert members tenures have been extended and 10 panel members have left as their tenures have come to an end. .

Policy discussed the recruitment campaign and timeline for the new Psychiatric Panel Chair. Policy asked panel if additional panel members were required for the psych panel with specific expertise, Panel advised early intervention/rehabilitation and a Psychiatry practitioner confident in diagnosing attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) . Panel discussed broader communication routes when recruiting including Faculties, Universities and Colleges. Policy also advised they will be recruiting new lay members across all panels this year.

5. Alzheimer's Disease

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease – Medical Standard.

The Senior DVLA Doctor advised that panel previously advised that the diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease is a pathological rather than a clinical diagnosis.

The potential implications for DVLA relate to possible unnecessary notifications being received, and, in particular to inappropriate Group 2 licence revocations/refusals should customers notify of Alzheimer's Disease rather than of dementia in Alzheimer's Disease.

DVLA are currently reviewing the relevant medical questionnaires and plan to incorporate these considerations in that review.

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DVLA would also welcome panel advice on the appropriate wording for Assessing Fitness to Drive (AFTD) and also for the customer-facing A-Z website?

The draft questionnaires were reviewed, and advice provided by panel. The Senior DVLA Doctor and Panel Chair will further review the documents prior to circulation to the group for feedback.

6. Raising Healthcare Professions' Awareness of Mental Health Medical Standards for Fitness to Drive

The Panel chair suggested that there is potential to improve the awareness of clinicians of the psychiatric medical standards for fitness to drive. The Chair invited suggestions as to how this might be achieved.

Panel advised that improved communication between DVLA and clinicians was a key factor, and that availability of educational resource for clinicians is important. It was suggested that DVLA consider the possibility of a single point of access to information which might include published standards, medical questionnaires, webinars/lectures, and FAQ's. It was also advised that dissemination of information to drivers through the relevant charity organisations, employment Health & Safety groups might be considered.

7. Specialist Psychiatry Reports

Independent Psychiatry Reports

The Senior DVLA Doctor reminded panel of previous discussions regarding DVLA's occasional difficulties in sourcing clinician reports. Panel had advised that establishing a network of psychiatrists willing to undertake this work should be explored. Following this advice DVLA had contacted psychiatrists via the Royal College of Psychiatrists and have established a network of specialists (at least 5 years post-CCT) willing to provide such reports.

5 reports have been commissioned from general psychiatrists since January 2024: 4 of these are in relation to Group 1 licensing and one Group 2 report has been requested.

The network currently comprises psychiatrists with the following expertise:

- General Psychiatry
- Old Age Psychiatry
- Neuropsychiatry
- Forensic Psychiatry
- Addiction Psychiatry

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Panel Chair requested that DVLA pass on their thanks to the independent Psychiatrists and their gratitude to the work they are conducting, and also suggested that DVLA monitor the outcome of this work to inform future possible developments.

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 the requirement to update panel about any information/tests/research that could impact on standards or existing processes.

Panel discussed self-driving cars and the impact on driving standards, Policy advised there were no current updates, but will make panel aware should this change. Panel advised a presentation on self-driving cars would be beneficial.

9. AOB

Call for Evidence

Driver Licensing Policy discussed the call for evidence. DVLA launched a call for evidence on driver licensing and medical conditions which ran for 12 weeks from 31 July 2023. Evidence was gathered from members of the public and a range of experts across organisations, and responses are currently being analysed to assist with reviewing the existing legislative framework. A summary of the responses will be published in due course.

Short Period Licensing (SPL)

The Senior DVLA Doctor advised that the SPL project is awaiting consideration by the DVLA Executive Team.

10. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 8th October 2024

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Original draft minutes prepared by:

Siân Taylor

Note Taker

Date: 12/03/24

Final minutes signed off by:

Professor Robert Howard

Interim Panel Chair

Date: 04/04/24

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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