



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

Meeting held on Tuesday 8th October 2024

Present:

Panel Members:

Professor Robert Howard (Interim Chair)	Professor of Old Age Psychiatry
Dr Daniel Dalton	Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist
Dr Nicholas Woodthorpe	Consultant Psychiatrist
Dr Mary Fisher – Morris	Chartered Psychologist

Observers:

Dr Tania Jagathesan	Civil Aviation Authority
Clare Forshaw	Principal Strategy Implementation Manager RSSB

Ex-officio:

Dr Nick Jenkins	Senior DVLA Doctor
Dr Elliott King	DVLA Doctor
Dr Alison Stapley	DVLA Doctor
Dr Mohammed Dani	DVLA Doctor
Leigh Andrew Bromfield	Driver Licensing Policy Lead
Emma Lewis	Driver Licensing Policy
Michael Jones	Driver Licensing Policy
Dewi Richards	Driver Licensing Policy
Richard Davies	Service Management
Danielle Theophilus	Service Management
Katy Adams	DVLA Doctors Casework Management and Support
Sian Taylor	Panel Coordinator

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Mr Nikhil Gokani	Lay member
Dr Abrar Ibrahim	General Practitioner
Mr Anthony Arcari	Lay member
Dr Sue Stannard	Chief Medical Advisor, Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Tom Mogford	Senior Lead Drivers Medical Business Support/Change

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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 meetings. The Chair reminded members to ensure their declarations of interest were up to date.

3. ACTIONS/MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

No Actions/Matters Arising were carried over from the previous meeting.

SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Dissociative Seizures and Functional Neurological Disorder

Panel was advised that the medical standard for dissociative seizures currently resides in the Neurology Chapter of Assessing Fitness to Drive (AFTD). Previously it had also featured in the Psychiatry Chapter in the "Behavioural Disorders" section. The nomenclature for this standard had recently been discussed by the Neurology Panel who had also suggested amendments to the standard. DVLA requested that Panel further advise on:

- i. nomenclature
- ii. the appropriate medical standard
- iii. how/where the standard should be presented in AFTD
- iv. guidance regarding the management of cases where a diagnosis of Functional Neurological Disorder is declared or notified.

Panel discussed current clinical practice in relation to the condition.

It was suggested that customer insight/consultation may be helpful when considering nomenclature.

Panel discussed the appropriate medical standard and considered that possible triggers should be explored, especially when episodes occur within a vehicle. Panel advised that, when events have occurred in a vehicle, a minimum period of 6 months off Group 1 driving should apply in addition to the requirement of a specialist report for relicensing.

Panel discussed guidance regarding the management of those cases where a diagnosis of Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) has been made. Panel advised that in the case of both dissociative occurrences and in FND a medical review licence was appropriate because of the

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potential for progression of symptoms and/or change in manifestation of condition. It was advised that a 3-year review licence would be appropriate in the majority of cases.

Panel advised that the appropriate specialist to provide reports would be a consultant psychiatrist or a consultant neurologist with expertise in the management of functional disorders.

DVLA thanked panel and advised they would review the information.

5. Call for Evidence

Driver Licencing Policy updated panel members. The Call for Evidence regarding driver licensing for people with medical conditions, was an early-stage request for input from members of the public, and a range of health and other experts across organisations to assist the DVLA with reviewing the existing legal framework. The Call for Evidence received nearly 500 responses which are currently being analysed. A summary of the responses received will be published in due course.

6. Panel Recruitment Update

Driver Licencing Policy advised panel that a campaign which ran for 10 weeks finished at the end of September. We are currently looking for a specialist in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) which is an essential requirement. As part of this campaign, we were also looking for expert members for other panels as well as lay members across all panels.

Unfortunately, we didn't receive any applications for the psychiatry role and the intention is to readvertise for the expert Psychiatry role in the next recruitment campaign.

Policy asked panel members if there were any target areas to advertise in and would panel wish to propose any further expertise/requirements for future recruitment.

Panel offered their support in providing written articles to help promote the role and offered advice on where to advertise.

7. Fatal Accident Inquiry Update

The Senior DVLA Doctor provided the background on the case.

Panel discussed the issue as to whether clinicians should be required to notify DVLA should their patients receive a dementia diagnosis. Panel advised that, were the necessary legislative

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arrangements in place, they would support the requirement for clinician notification and considered that the Secondary Care service would be best placed to make such notification.

Panel considered whether mandatory cognitive testing at licence renewal would receive their support. Panel advised that were such testing a requirement the testing from the age of 80 onwards would likely prove to be the most efficient use of resources.

Panel concluded that they were generally supportive of the principle of screening in this manner but the implications for the effects on clinical practice would need to be considered, both with regard to undertaking screening and also in managing individuals identified with a previously undiagnosed medical condition.

DVLA thanked panel for their view.

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.

No new information was raised by Panel.

9. AOB

Driver Licensing Policy advised that DVLA are running an induction course for Panel Members in DVLA Swansea. There are 3 sessions: 14th November 5th December and 12th December.

10. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 4th March 2025

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Original draft minutes prepared by:

Siân Taylor

Note Taker

Date: 09/10/24

Final minutes signed off by:

Professor Robert Howard

Interim Panel Chair

Date: 09/01/25

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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