



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

Meeting held on Tuesday 11th March 2025

Present:

Panel Members:

Dr Claire Howard (Chair)	Stroke Specialist Research Orthoptist
Professor Roger Anderson	Academic Optometrist
Mrs Catherine Butcher	Specialist Orthoptist
Mr Ian Rodrigues	Consultant Ophthalmologist
Dr Lauren Hepworth	Post-doctoral Research Orthoptist
Dr Lucille Southee	Lay Member

OBSERVERS:

Joy Wyche	Research Assistant for the DRIVE study
Dr Sue Stannard	Chief Medical Advisor, Maritime and Coastguard Agency

EX-OFFICIO:

Dr Nick Jenkins	Senior DVLA Doctor
Dr Darren Griffiths	DVLA Doctor
Leigh Andrew Bromfield	Driver Licensing Policy Lead
Emma Lewis	Driver Licensing Policy
Claire Hughes	Driver Licensing Policy
Karen Hughes	Driver Licensing Policy
Danielle Theophilus	DVLA Service Management
Richard Davies	DVLA Service Management
Andrew Turner	Drivers Medical Contracts Team
Mandy Hodgson	DVLA Commercial Category Lead
Shareen Gelstharp	DVLA Commercial Specialist
Adam Cattroll	DVLA Commercial Specialist
Tom Mogford	Senior Lead, Drivers Medical Business Support and Change
Michelle Davies	DVLA Doctors Casework Management and Support
Siân Taylor	DVLA Panel Coordinator & PA to the Senior DVLA Doctor

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Clare Forshaw

Professor Ian Pearce

Tom Mogford

Principal Strategy Implementation Manager RSSB

Royal College of Ophthalmologists

Senior Lead, Drivers Medical Business Support and Change

2. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Panel Chair welcomed attendees and asked participants to introduce themselves and their roles within the panel.

3. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING/MATTERS ARISING

i. Glaucoma and licence duration

DVLA Service Management provided an update on glaucoma and licence duration. DVLA is considering the actions required and will provide a future update to panel.

ii. Update on DVLA appeal cases

The Senior DVLA Doctor discussed two recent appeal cases which concerned a diagnosis of sectoral retinitis pigmentosa and application for consideration as an exceptional vision case. Panel reiterated its current position that sectoral retinitis pigmentosa is a progressive condition. Possible future research / literature review was discussed.

iii. Update from diplopia subgroup meeting

The Panel Chair summarised the outcome of a subgroup meeting in February 2025. The subgroup aims to simply and clarify the notification process for both customers and their clinicians. Once the review is completed a proposal will be circulated to the panel for comments.

iv. Update on visual inattention subgroup meeting

The Panel Chair and Dr Lauren Hepworth met with representatives from the neurology panel to discuss guidance regarding visual inattention and associated conditions. Further meetings of the subgroup will take place and outcomes will be fed back to panel members.

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SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Exceptional case process

The Senior DVLA Doctor requested guidance from panel on aspects of the driving assessment process for exceptional case assessment. DVLA asked:

- Whether a drive that was considered to be safe and to demonstrate full functional adaptation to the visual field defect was sufficient, or whether a higher standard drive should be required.
- Whether there were any specific requirements from the assessment that DVLA should specify e.g. exposure to potential hazards in the area of visual field affected by the defect.

Panel advised that an assessment drive should demonstrate safety and confirm full functional adaptation. Panel advised that a drive without error would be an unrealistic expectation and advised DVLA that the clinical assessor present during the driving assessment should consider the implication of any such error on safety and whether full functional adaptation has occurred.

DVLA contracts manager suggested that DVLA should ensure that referrals to Driving Mobility should explicitly detail the issues that DVLA require the assessment to answer.

5. Glaucoma: acute angle-closure vs. chronic glaucoma

The Senior DVLA Doctor advised that, when DVLA is notified of a diagnosis of glaucoma, regular ongoing visual field assessments will be undertaken.

DVLA asked Panel whether notification of acute-angle closure glaucoma should result in the same ongoing assessment.

Panel clarified that acute-angle closure is an acute event that, in the absence of subsequent glaucoma, does not require DVLA follow up.

6. Update from other panels

Panel's attention was directed to the minutes of the Autumn 2024 meetings and the agendas of the Spring 2025 meetings of all advisory panels.

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SECTION C: ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS

7. 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.

The Panel Chair covered two topics:

DVLA visual acuity testing with DigiVis

The company promoting the DigiVis product requested that the product receive consideration from the Vision Panel. DVSA had previously presented work aimed at identifying potential alternatives to the roadside visual acuity test. The DigiVis is one such alternative.

Driver Licensing Policy advised that DVSA may have an update for Panel in a future meeting.

Research update

Joy Wyche presented the findings from the DRIVE study, which analysed data from driving assessments undertaken in individuals presenting with visual impairments. The study aims to improve understanding and provide guidance for healthcare professionals regarding fitness to drive.

Panel members thanked Joy Wyche for her comprehensive presentation and look forward to a further update in the Autumn Panel meeting.

8. AOB

Panel Recruitment

Driver Licensing Policy provided an update on the recruitment of new panel members, including the recommendation for four new expert members and the ongoing search for lay members.

Goldmann Visual Fields Issue

Drivers Medical Contracts Team provided an update on work currently being undertaken which is aimed at improving the accuracy of commissioned visual field tests, and thus reducing the requirement for alternative visual assessments. Currently the work addresses the quality of literature provided by DVLA to customers/clinicians prior to visual field testing.

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The work also seeks to understand the geographical spread of Octopus 900 machines with a view to potentially commissioning the use of such perimetry as an alternative assessment.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 28th October 2025

Original draft minutes prepared by:

**Siân Taylor
Note Taker
Date: 12/03/25**

Final minutes signed off by:

**Dr Claire Howard
Panel Chair
Date: 25/03/25**

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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