



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

Meeting held on Tuesday 10th March 2026

Present:

Panel Members:

Dr Claire Howard Chair	Consultant Orthoptist
Professor Roger Anderson	Academic Optometrist
Mrs Catherine Butcher	Specialist Orthoptist
Mr Ian Rodrigues	Consultant Ophthalmologist
Dr Lauren Hepworth	Consultant Orthoptist
Dr Jay Self	Consultant Ophthalmologist
Mr Michael Horler	Consultant Optometrist

OBSERVERS:

Dr Mary Jo Ryan	Irish National Office for Traffic Medicine
Professor Ian Pearce	Royal College of Ophthalmologists
Dr Sue Stannard	Chief Medical Advisor, Maritime and Coastguard Agency

EX-OFFICIO:

Dr Athanasios Lamprakis	Senior DVLA Doctor
Dr Amanda Edgeworth	Deputy Senior DVLA Doctor
Dr Nick Jenkins	DVLA Doctor
Dr Cathy Armstrong	DVLA Doctor
Dr James Galletly	DVLA Doctor
Keziah Grieveson	DVLA Doctor
Claire Hughes	Driver Licensing Policy
Lisa Humphreys	Driver Licensing Policy
Karen Hughes	Driver Licensing Policy
Ann Church	DVLA Nurse
Andrew Turner	DVLA Contracts Team
Sharann Oliver	DVLA Service Management
Mandy Hodgson	DVLA Commercial Category Lead
Shareen Gelstharp	DVLA Commercial Specialist
Rhodri Llewellyn	DVLA Commercial Practitioner
Tom Mogford	Senior Lead, Drivers Medical Business Support and Change
Donna Goldsmith	Drivers Medical Business Change
Sarah Samuel	Drivers Medical Business Change
Jordan Kwan	Drivers Medical Business Change
Andrea Lee	Drivers Medical Business Change
David George	Drivers Medical Business Change
Emma Nelson-Jones	DVLA Doctors Casework Management and Support Lead

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Mr Manoj Parulekar	Consultant Optometrist
Ms Rukaiya Anwar	Optometrist
Clare Forshaw	Principal Strategy Implementation Manager RSSB
Dr Sandeep Gwinnett	DVLA Doctor
Siân Taylor	DVLA Panel Coordinator & PA to the Senior DVLA Doctor

2. CHAIR'S REMARKS

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

3. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING/MATTERS ARISING

i. Diplopia Update

The Panel Chair advised that a subgroup had convened in February to review the current wording relating to diplopia.

Panel reviewed the new wording for Assessing Fitness to Drive (AFTD) confirmed:

- Driving may resume only when diplopia is satisfactorily controlled.
- If controlled via occlusion, monocular vision standards apply.
- If symptoms persist beyond three months, DVLA must be notified.

This replaces the previous requirement for immediate notification. DVLA doctors confirmed functional/practical driving assessments will not routinely be required; cases handled individually with consultant input.

Assessing Fitness to Drive (AFTD) updated guidance will be issued once all panel amendments (across specialties) are collected. Tripartite Group confirms changes will be coordinated to avoid fragmented updates.

ii. Alternatives to Goldman Visual Fields

- Goldman perimeters are becoming obsolete; DVLA moving to adopt Octopus 900 in cases where Goldman perimeters have been required.
- DVLA has written to NHS providers regarding participation; response numbers modest.

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- Internal processes, referral templates and nearest-provider lists require updating.
- Additional training for DVLA doctors on interpreting Octopus outputs will be provided.

iii. Mandatory Eyesight Testing Consultation

- DfT consultation extended to **11 May 2026**.
- Discussed operational challenges, including:
 - Variation in clinicians' ability to interpret fields.
 - Supplier capacity (e.g., borderline visual fields, false positives).
 - Overseas models (Ireland, New Zealand).
 - Cognitive and speed-of-processing factors in older drivers.

Members encouraged to respond and request organisational submissions

SECTION B: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Peli Lenses

The Panel Chair discussed the appropriateness of Peli lenses for driving, the Chair advised that Peli lenses intentionally induce diplopia by shifting images from the blind side into central gaze. Reported risks include visual confusion and higher adverse event rates.

- Panel consensus:
 - Peli lenses should not be used for driving (exceptional cases or standard licensing).
 - AFTD wording should be updated to specify that only standard spectacles/contact lenses are permitted; field-expansion devices (including bioptics and Peli lenses) are not accepted.

Chair to draft new wording for panel review.

5. Esotropia and Group 2 licensing

In October 2023, the panel reviewed the scientific paper "*Binocular visual field in adults with horizontal strabismus and driving requirements*"¹ and concluded that no change in process was required for Group 1 drivers.

¹ Fadi Alfaqawi¹, Jane Young¹ and Stephen B. Kaye

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Because esotropia may reduce binocular visual field width, it is currently DVLA practice to commission visual field assessments for Group 2 customers when this medical condition is notified.

DVLA requested panel to consider whether this approach is appropriate.

Panel advised that no evidence yet on pass/fail rates; suppression effects discussed. Concerns were raised about reliability of self-reported terms (“squint”, “eso/exo”).

Panel agreed that DVLA should continue current practice and begin 6-month prospective data collection on all “squint” declarations and outcomes. The matter will be further considered following data collection.

6. Update from other panels

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

- Neurology Panel approved revised Visual Neglect wording (previously “visual inattention”).
- Implementation requires updates to forms, processes and internal documentation.

Clarification required on DVLA notification rules for short-term (< 3 months) field loss post-stroke. Chair will raise at Neuro Panel meeting

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 advised that the British and Irish Orthoptic Society have produced a new guidance document developed to support orthoptists in reporting vision concerns to Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) / Driver and Vehicle (DVA). This document was prepared in response to the recent coroner’s inquest (Westwell, Cunningham, Foulds and Ferguson) and publication of the subsequent report to prevent future deaths.

Panel members discussed the disclosure of personal information to the DVLA/DVA by orthoptists.

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- New orthoptist guidance on DVLA reporting published; widely attended webinar delivered.
- Ongoing academic projects:
 - *Drive Study* (HCP fitness-to-drive decision-making)
 - *Drive-2 Study* (visual field interpretation accuracy)
 - Systematic review on Visual Acuity and older drivers
 - Prevention of Future Deaths report search tool
 - VR-based visual field-testing devices — require further validation

Discussion on long-term potential for automated/AI interpretation of visual fields.

8. AOB

i. Panel recruitment

Driver Licensing Policy provided an update on Panel recruitment.

Recruitment campaign closed 27 Feb; 36 applications across all panels.

- Vision Panel recruiting two lay members.
- Interviews scheduled for May.

Chair requested involvement in interview process; DVLA to confirm eligibility under appointment rules.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 27th October

Original draft minutes prepared by:

Siân Taylor
Note Taker
Date: 01/04/26

Final minutes signed off by:

Dr Claire Howard
Panel Chair
Date: 22/04/26

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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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