



Driver & Vehicle
Licensing
Agency

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Our ref: JD/TWG

Date: 5 July 2019

Dear Mrs Collins,

Thank you for your letter of 21 June 2019, asking for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) input on requiring medical staff, the police and other relevant agencies to inform us when an individual's health is reducing their ability to drive safely

Road safety is a priority for the Department for Transport and the DVLA is focused on ensuring that only those who are fit to drive are granted a driving licence. In law, it is the licence holder who has a duty to notify the DVLA of any medical condition that may affect their ability to drive safely. However, the law allows the DVLA to undertake a medical investigation whenever there are reasonable grounds for believing that a driver's health may be affecting their ability to drive safely. The DVLA already regularly receives notifications from third parties, including health professionals, the police and concerned family and friends where a driver has failed to notify us of a medical condition.

A driver's own medical professionals play an important role in considering the impact of health on driving and doctors can and do regularly make the decision to notify us about their patient's health. As you are aware, the General Medical Council's guidance states that doctors should advise their patients of conditions and treatments that may affect their ability to drive and remind them to notify the DVLA. The guidance also goes further and confirms a doctor's duty to disclose information to the DVLA where a patient has failed to do so. The College of Optometrists has similar guidance for its members.

In relation to the Ten Minute Rule Bill, I would firstly advise that a diagnosis of dementia is not a bar to driving and it is widely recognised that in its early stages, holding a driving licence in terms of independence and mobility can be important. Assessing driving fitness in those with dementia can be complex as there are different presentations and rates of progression. It is also important that investigations are conducted at the appropriate time so that those who remain fit to drive do not face unnecessary costs and inconvenience.



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You may be interested to learn that where appropriate, we already request a formal driving assessment to determine fitness to drive. This allows us to focus on those who need such an assessment. Assessments are carried out by specialist occupational therapists, and advanced driving instructors and include cognitive tests, reaction times and limb strength tests on a special static rig and finally an on road session in a dual braking car. Following the assessment, a copy of the report will be sent to the DVLA to consider. Where the appropriate health standards are not met, we will revoke entitlement to drive.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Donovan', with a long, wavy horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr Jason Donovan
Head of Driver Licensing Policy