



## Department for Transport

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From the Secretary of State

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Our Ref: [REDACTED]

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26 October 2021

Dear Mrs Brown,

Thank you for your report of 10 September made under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and Regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, following the inquest you conducted into the death of Mr Billy Martyn Warwick-Jones.

I was very sorry to learn of the tragic circumstances of this case and would like to express my sincere condolences to the families of those involved.

I have considered your report which highlights your concern that there is insufficient testing and instruction of the older population with regards to road safety, and its recommendations very carefully.

As outlined on Gov.uk, the current driver licensing arrangements are underpinned by a legal requirement that all drivers must inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) if at any time they develop a medical condition that may affect safe driving. Doctors and other healthcare professionals play an important part in the driver licensing process by advising their patients of the implications of their condition, the effect of any treatment or medication that they are receiving, and whether they need to notify the DVLA.

To support medical professionals, the DVLA has published guidance for medical professionals which can be accessed on Gov.uk. The DVLA also provides a dedicated and confidential telephone line for health professionals to contact one of its doctors for case-specific advice or general guidance. Although there is no legal obligation for doctors to notify the DVLA about a patient who is medically unfit to drive, they can and do make such notifications to the DVLA.

The General Medical Council (GMC) also provides guidance for doctors. As well as circumstances where consent may be obtained from patients to notify the DVLA of a medical condition, the guidance also covers circumstances where patients do not consent, or where they are unwilling or unable to notify the DVLA themselves. Doctors must consider the patient's needs, but also the risk to the public if a medical condition is likely to be a source of danger on the road. Doctors do not have to be aware that their patients are actually driving in circumstances where they consider that they are incapable of understanding the advice provided and should inform the DVLA as soon as possible. The GMC guidance sets this out clearly, and doctors must make a judgement in each case.

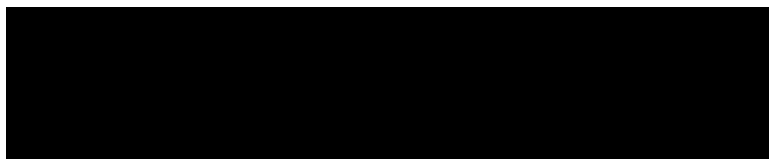
Turning to the specific condition in this case, a urinary tract infection is not covered by an individual section in the guidance for medical professionals, but there is a section on temporary medical conditions. This confirms that drivers generally do not need to notify the DVLA of conditions for which clinical advice has indicated less than three months of no driving. For this temporary condition, it should be discussed by the driver and the doctor providing treatment. If the judgement of the clinician is that the DVLA needs to be notified, they should advise the patient to do so.

A driver's age is, in itself, not an automatic barrier to driving. But the likelihood of having a medical condition that can affect safe driving does increase with age. The current process for drivers renewing their licences at age 70 or over is designed to balance road safety and the needs of the individual. There is little evidence to suggest that introducing a stricter regime which included mandatory testing or medical examinations would improve road safety. Drivers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about their driving fitness with their own medical professionals.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, with funding from the Department, has developed an older driver website which can be accessed at: [www.olderdrivers.org.uk](http://www.olderdrivers.org.uk). The website contains information to help older people to continue to drive for as long as they are safe to do so. It includes general advice, as well as details on driving assessments and refresher training.

I can assure you that I and the DVLA take road safety very seriously, and while our roads are some of the safest in the world, I am not complacent. As such all policies relating to road safety are kept under constant review.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Secretary of State for Transport.  
**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**