



Department
for Transport

Mr Leslie Hamilton
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From the Secretary of State
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09 June 2023

Dear Mr Hamilton,

Thank you for your correspondence, about your investigation into the death of Mr Charles William Wheatley. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in my reply.

I was sorry to read of the circumstances which prompted this correspondence, and I would like to extend my condolences to the families involved.

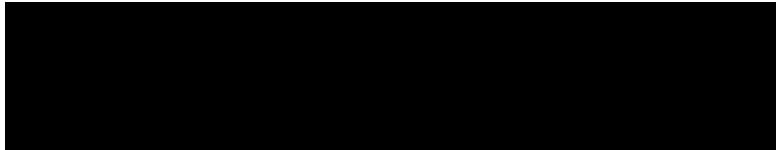
Anyone driving a vehicle should always hold the appropriate driving licence for the vehicle they are driving and comply with the rules of the road. In this instance, the individual was breaking numerous existing laws by driving whilst over the legal alcohol limit, without wearing a seatbelt, without a valid driving licence and avoiding the checks which are already in place to assess a person's fitness to drive. The law requires that drivers with epilepsy who wish to drive cars or motorcycles must be seizure free for one year, before an application for a driving licence can be considered.

I note that following the inquest, you have asked why an individual is able to purchase a vehicle when they do not hold a driving licence. It may help to explain that the purpose of the vehicle register held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), is to record details of vehicles and their registered keepers. While the DVLA requests proof of the applicant's name and address when a vehicle is first registered, and for the driving licence number of a new keeper at subsequent keeper changes, there is no requirement in law to hold a driving licence to register a vehicle, or to become the keeper of an already registered vehicle.

It is already a criminal offence to drive a vehicle without a licence whether you are the keeper or not, but there is no legal requirement to hold a licence in order to be the registered keeper. There are many circumstances where the buyer and keeper of a vehicle may not hold a driving licence. For example, a person may buy a vehicle for another individual such as a carer with no intention of driving the vehicle themselves, and in circumstances where vehicles are bought by and registered to companies and fleets as the keepers.

I hope this is helpful and I am grateful to you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT