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Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

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Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Date: 4 October 2024

Dear Jessica Swift,

Thank you for your report of 12 August 2024 made under paragraph 7, Schedule 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, following the inquest into the deaths of Geoffrey Stewart Toase and Michael William Midgley.

I was very sorry to learn of the circumstances of Mr Toase and Mr Midgley's deaths and I would like to express my sincere condolences to their families.

I have considered your report and its recommendations carefully and I can assure you that the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) takes such matters very seriously.

The current driver licensing arrangements are underpinned by a legal requirement that all drivers, of any age, must inform the DVLA at any time if they develop a medical condition that may affect safe driving. All drivers must meet the appropriate medical standards for driving and a licence will only be issued to those who meet those standards.

Where a driving licence holder or applicant is suffering from a relevant or prospective disability, driving licences may be issued for a shorter period so that fitness to drive can be regularly reviewed. This helps to ensure that drivers continue to meet the required medical standards for driving. These arrangements are designed to be balanced and proportionate for all drivers, balancing road safety and the mobility of individuals.

The medical standards relating to fitness to drive are set out in the DVLA's guidance: [Assessing fitness to drive: a guide for medical professionals](#). The guidance is based on both domestic legislation and advice from the Secretary of State for Transport's [Honorary Medical Advisory Panels](#). The guidance advises members of the medical profession on the medical standards that need to be met by individuals to hold licences to drive various categories of vehicles. The medical panels provide the DVLA with expert medical advice about relevant medical conditions and their impact on driving and this feeds into the guidance provided.

The [guidance specific to diabetes](#) is based on legislation and the advice provided by the Secretary of State for Transport's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel on Driving and Diabetes Mellitus.

The DVLA's Drivers Medical team assesses all driving licence applications against the required standards. A medical questionnaire will be sent to the applicant in the first instance, asking them for more information about their condition. The applicant is also asked to provide authorisation for their healthcare professional to release information from their medical records to the DVLA.

If further information is required, the DVLA will write directly to the relevant doctor and/or consultant managing the care and treatment of the applicant. This information is requested in the form of a questionnaire which is designed to be completed from medical records. Other registered healthcare professionals can also provide information to the DVLA where it is appropriate to do so. It is for the individual practice or hospital team to decide which appropriately registered healthcare professional is best placed to complete the questionnaire. Healthcare professionals can also [contact the DVLA's doctors directly](#) if they have any concerns about their patient driving.

Where more information is needed to establish fitness to drive, the DVLA may also request a medical examination and/or driving assessment. If the investigation finds that a driver has a relevant disability and cannot meet the medical standards, an existing licence will be revoked or an application refused. As outlined above, the DVLA can also issue a licence for a shorter period, typically between one and five years, allowing driving fitness to be more regularly monitored.

Any applications referred to the DVLA's doctors are usually more complex and often involve multiple medical conditions. A reviewing DVLA doctor wishing to carry out a full assessment can decide to write to the nominated healthcare professional to request any further information on the applicant's health that they may consider relevant.

The DVLA's doctors take a holistic clinical view of each case and consider the impact that multiple medical conditions could have on fitness to drive in order to make a licensing decision. Particularly complex cases are sometimes referred to one of the expert members of the relevant medical panel to review and on occasion, cases may be discussed at the relevant medical panel meeting.

All drivers have a legal responsibility to notify the DVLA of the onset or worsening of a relevant medical condition. It is an offence not to do so and drivers who fail to notify or make a false declaration can be fined up to £1,000.

Drivers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about their ongoing driving fitness with their own healthcare professionals and to notify the DVLA where appropriate. The DVLA takes road safety very seriously and the UK's roads are among the safest in the world. However, we are not complacent and our processes and policies are kept under review. Last year the DVLA issued a call for evidence to gather a wide range of views and evidence that may support future changes to the legal framework which underpins the current medical driver licensing process in Great Britain. The responses are currently being analysed.

I am grateful to you for bringing your concerns to my attention. I can assure you that we take road safety very seriously and we are focused on ensuring that only those who are fit to drive are granted a licence to do so.

Yours sincerely



Head of Strategy and Policy

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