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Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

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Our Ref:

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Date: 22 April 2025

Dear Mr Ellery

Thank you for your report of 17 January 2025 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 investigation you conducted into the death of Ian Paul Harris. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding, this was due to the original letters and follow ups not being received by the relevant people.

I was very sorry to learn of the circumstances of Mr Harris's death and would like to express my sincere condolences to his family. 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. Failure to do so is an offence. All drivers must meet the appropriate medical standards for driving and a licence will only be issued to those who meet those standards. 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 called "Assessing fitness to drive: a guide for medical professionals", which is available online at [Assessing fitness to drive: a guide for medical professionals - GOV.UK](#). The guidance is based on legislation and advice from the Secretary of State for Transport's Honorary Medical Advisory Panels. The medical panels provide the DVLA with expert medical advice about relevant medical conditions and their impact on driving. The guidance advises members of the medical profession on the medical standards that must be met by individuals to hold licences to drive various categories of vehicles.

The medical standards for drivers of lorries and buses are substantially higher than for drivers of cars and motorcycles due to the size and weight of the vehicle and the length of time a professional driver typically spends at the wheel.

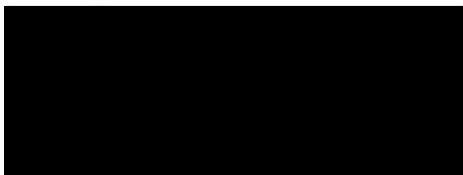
Drivers of lorries and buses are required to renew their driving entitlement every five years from the age of 45 and then annually from the age of 65. When renewing their licence, a driver must make a declaration regarding their health and it is an offence to make a false declaration. They driver must also submit a D4 medical report which must be completed following an examination which must be carried out by a doctor registered and licensed to practice by the General Medical Council in the UK or registered within the EU.

The DVLA recommends that drivers ask their own GP to complete the D4 medical report as the GP will have access to medical records and could provide medical information that may be required. However, it is not a legal requirement for drivers to ask their own GP to carry out the examination and complete the D4 report. Making it a requirement for a driver's own GP to carry out the examination and complete the form may have significant impacts on drivers and the transport industry in terms of time and costs. Also, GPs are not obliged to complete D4 medical reports as this is classed as private work and is not carried out on the NHS. We are aware of a number of private companies that offer this service to drivers and where this is the case, and as only GPs are likely to have access to the full medical records, the examining doctor must be satisfied that they have sufficient information about a driver's medical history and should not sign a D4 report where there is any doubt.

I can confirm that the information provided to the DVLA on Mr Harris's D4 medical reports did not raise any health concerns which would have required the DVLA to conduct medical investigations into his fitness to drive.

I am grateful to you for bringing your concerns to my attention. I can assure you that we are not complacent, we take road safety very seriously and are focused on ensuring that only those who are fit to drive are granted a licence. The DVLA will continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders to raise awareness of the impact medical conditions may have on fitness to drive and continue to explore any potential options for further improvements.

Yours sincerely



Head of Strategy and Policy

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