



Department for Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Mr Adam Hodson
Area Coroner for Birmingham and Solihull
The Birmingham and Solihull Coroner's Court
Steelhouse Lane
Birmingham
B4 6BJ

[REDACTED]

7 January 2026

Dear Mr Hodson,

Thank you for your report made under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and Regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013 to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), following the inquest you conducted into the death of Christopher Graham Ayerst Sampson. I am responding as the Minister responsible for road safety.

I was very sorry to learn of the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Sampson and I extend my sincere condolences to his family.

I have considered your report and the points you have raised very carefully. I recognise your concerns about the risk of future deaths occurring when a driver fails to tell the DVLA about their medical condition and their healthcare professional does not notify the DVLA in the interests of road safety and protect the wider public.

All drivers must ensure they meet the required medical standards for driving at all times and are legally required to tell the DVLA about the onset or worsening of a condition that could affect their ability to drive safely.

While this legal responsibility rests with the driver the DVLA also acts on notifications received from the police, healthcare professionals, friends, relatives or neighbours. These notifications are treated as high priority and results in the DVLA will initiating an investigation which may include gathering information from the driver and their doctor. The DVLA may also commission a medical examination or driving assessment. Only drivers who are assessed as meeting the required medical standards will be issued with a licence.

Healthcare professionals play a vital role in the licensing process and should advise patients on how their condition or treatment may impact their fitness to drive and when they need to inform the DVLA. To support healthcare professionals, the DVLA publishes guidance on GOV.UK called 'Assessing Fitness to Drive – a guide for medical professionals'. The DVLA also offers a dedicated email service for healthcare professionals to seek case-specific or general advice from the DVLA's team of doctors about health conditions and driving.

Healthcare professionals are not legally obliged to notify the DVLA about a patient who has a medical condition that may affect their fitness to drive, but guidance from the relevant regulatory bodies, including the General Medical Council (GMC), advises medical professionals that they can notify the DVLA of a patient's medical condition in the interests of the safety of the patient and the wider public. GMC guidance advises that, where doctors are aware that an individual has not understood their advice or has chosen to continue driving despite their advice, a notification to the DVLA in the public interest does not breach patient confidentiality. The General Optical Council provides similar advice to eye health professionals.

Although the self-declaration process for notifying medical conditions to the DVLA is intended to empower drivers to take personal responsibility for their fitness to drive, I recognise that some drivers wilfully ignore medical advice and will not notify the DVLA and continue driving. This can have potentially devastating consequences.

Officials will also continue to engage with healthcare professionals and their regulatory bodies to reinforce the importance of notifying the DVLA if their patient lacks the capacity or willingness to inform the DVLA of their condition themselves.

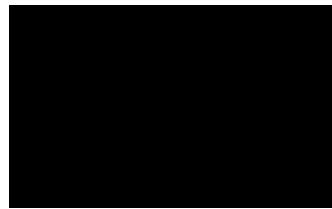
My department also recognises that the volume and complexity of driving licence applications for those with one or more medical conditions is increasing, reflecting both an ageing population and a strong desire among drivers to maintain the independence that driving provides. We are considering the evidence gathered during the 2023 call for evidence, alongside findings from recent inquests, and as part of this work, consideration will be given to the process of self-declaration. Road safety measures have not been reviewed for over a decade, and my department has developed a new Road Safety Strategy, which has been published today, 7 January.

This strategy adopts a "Safe System" approach and includes areas such as preventative interventions, driver education and enforcement. The strategy also considers the needs of vulnerable road user groups, including elderly

drivers and whether consideration should be given to introducing mandatory eyesight testing.

Thank you for raising these important issues. I can assure you that the Government takes road safety very seriously and we are focused on ensuring that only those who are fit and safe to drive are issued with a driving licence. The policy development in such an important area as this is inherently complex and involves a wide range of stakeholders. I can confirm that this work is being treated as a priority and we are committed to delivering meaningful improvements to road safety and to preventing further avoidable tragedies.

Best wishes,



MINISTER FOR LOCAL TRANSPORT