Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency

**Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency**
Chief Executive
Longview Road
Morriston
Swansea
SA6 7JL

Phone: 01792 384538
Email: julie.lennard@dvla.gov.uk
Website: www.gov.uk/dvla

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Huw Merriman MP
Chair – Transport Committee

transcom@parliament.uk

Dear Mr Merriman,

Thank you for your letter of 20 July about the current position on the processing of paper applications to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

Our digital services continue to work extremely well, as they have done throughout the entire pandemic. Of all transactions with the DVLA, more than 83% are made digitally and customers receive their driving licences and vehicle registration documents within a few days when making online applications. We continue to strongly encourage all those who can apply online to do so.

As I set out in my letter to the Committee on the 18 March 2022, we eliminated backlogs relating to vehicle paper applications in February and the turnaround time has remained well within normal timescales ever since. I am pleased to be able to confirm that we also eliminated the backlog relating to drivers' paper applications in May and the turnaround times for those transactions have also remained steady since and well within normal turnaround times. In fact, the current turnaround time for both vehicle and driver paper applications is just three days on average. First applications for a driving licence are being actioned on the day they are received and applications accompanied by ID documents are also being processed immediately, ensuring customers' important documents are returned to them as quickly as possible.

As of week commencing 25 July, excluding the normal run rate of around 400,000, the number of paper applications above currently stands at 73,000. These outstanding cases are drivers' medical applications, where a medical condition must be investigated before a licence can be issued. This compares to a peak of 1.2 million in September last year and reflects how hard DVLA staff have worked to eliminate the backlogs that accumulated during 2021 during the periods of lockdown, on-site social distancing restrictions in Wales and 58 days of strike action.

Since I last wrote to the Committee, as of week commencing 25 July the number of cases that are older than 10 weeks has reduced by more than 31,000 and is now 175,734, the overwhelming majority of which are medical cases. Pre-pandemic, DVLA aimed to process 90 percent of medical applications within 90 days. These applications are the most complex

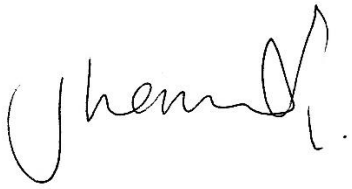
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that we deal with, and we often rely on timely responses from NHS medical professionals before a licence can be issued. Our staff are continuing to work very hard to return drivers' medical applications to pre-pandemic turnaround times, however we are also dependent on NHS medical professionals providing us with the information we need to attain that.

The Legislative Reform (Provision of Information etc. Relating to Disabilities) Order 2022 came into force thirteen days ago on 21 July 2022. This change will allow GP practices and hospital teams to manage their workloads with greater flexibility, enabling them to share the workload that previously rested only with doctors. We are optimistic that this change will improve timescales for applications where a driver has a medical condition, however, the degree to which it does is dependent on which medical conditions are being reported and how actively individual GP practices and hospital teams take advantage of the change. Since the law change came into force, all DVLA requests for information have highlighted the new flexibility and made clear that any relevant medical professional can now complete the form.

I hope this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Julie Lennard
Chief Executive