



Department
for Transport

Ruth Cadbury MP
Chair, Transport Committee
House of Commons
London
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From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Lilian Greenwood MP

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Our Ref:
Your Ref:

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Dear Ruth,

Measures to tackle long car practical driving test waiting times.

I am pleased to be writing to inform you that the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) will later this afternoon announce the decisive steps it is taking to address long waiting times for car practical driving tests.

Passing the car driving test is a rite of passage. A driving licence is a passport to employment, opportunities and better living standards for hundreds of thousands of young people each year. But across the country, waiting times for a car practical driving test are stark; 13 weeks in Wales, over 15 weeks in Scotland, and nearly 21 weeks in England. These figures highlight a system under strain.

Learner drivers should be able to take a test when they are ready. Yet thousands have had to wait many months, with some being exploited by businesses taking advantage of long waiting times or having to travel hundreds of miles in the process.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, DVSA carried out 1.95 million car driving tests. And it has over half a million driving tests booked in the next 24 weeks.

In response to increased demand, DVSA created an extra 145,000 test slots between October 2023 and March 2024 by redeploying eligible managers and administrative staff to conduct tests. DVSA has also reviewed its recruitment process and increased its effort to recruit and train driving examiners. But the case for further action is undeniable.

Today, DVSA has set out a robust plan to tackle this issue head on, while it helps to keep Britain moving safely and sustainably. The plan includes:

1. Recruiting and training 450 driving examiners.
2. Reviewing and improving the rules around booking tests, including measures to prevent the resale of driving test appointments.
3. Strengthening the terms and conditions for driver training businesses managing test bookings.
4. Consulting on introducing longer waiting times to rebook a test for candidates who fail by making multiple serious or dangerous faults, abuse driving examiners or fail to attend their test, and considering a penalty fee for those who fail to attend.
5. Increasing the notice period for changing or cancelling a test without losing the fee from 3 to 10 working days.
6. Exploring allowing learner drivers to book tests further in advance than the current 24-week limit.
7. Expanding the successful 'Ready to Pass?' campaign to help learners throughout the whole process of learning to drive.

These measures are practical, targeted, and designed to address the issues facing the driving test system.

But I have to be clear: there is no quick fix to the current situation. Just like learning to drive, fixing this problem is going to take patience, a structured approach and determination. It will take time for us to tackle the root causes of this issue, fix the broken system this government inherited and to build a robust system that, like a well-trained driver, can handle whatever challenges lie ahead in the future.

I am also pleased to inform you that DVSA has today published its 2024 to 2025 business plan.

This plan sets out the main business priorities the agency will deliver, including measures on the delivery of the car practical driving test that underpin the measures announced, as well as the key performance indicators by which DVSA's performance will be assessed.

This plan allows service users and members of the public to understand DVSA's plans for delivering its services and managing its finances.

The business plan will be available electronically on GOV.UK and copies will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lilian', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

LILIAN GREENWOOD MP
MINISTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ROADS