



Transport Committee

Lilian Greenwood MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Transport

By email

4 February 2025

Dear Lilian,

Measures to tackle practical car driving test wait times

Thank you for your letters of 18 December 2024 and 23 January 2025, relating to the Government's announcement of measures to tackle car practical driving test waiting times and providing additional information after your oral evidence to us on 4 December 2024.

The evidence that we have received shows that this is a longstanding problem, and whilst we recognise that this cannot be immediately rectified, the current situation needs to be tackled with urgency. We acknowledge the steps already taken, but note that there has been modest sustained impact on waiting times. We note that some of the measures outlined in your statement of 18 December relate to work that was already underway, and we are concerned that new or more radical ideas will be needed to bring about a meaningful difference.

We welcome the plan to increase the notice period for changing or cancelling a test without losing the fee from 3 to 10 working days. Regarding other parts of the Department's plan to reduce waiting times, we would welcome further clarification:

- 1) Your statement of 18 December 2024 said that DVSA would recruit 450 additional driving examiners. We note that this is the same target that was already set out in the [National Associations Strategic Partnership's joint quarterly meeting with DVSA](#) held in September 2024. Does your recent announcement mean that the recruitment target is now rising to 900? What is the DVSA's target date for recruiting these additional examiners, and will this figure be net increase in examiner numbers?
- 2) We heard in evidence from PCS that the DVSA has not met existing recruitment targets; they argued that the current pay scale and organisational culture were contributory factors for struggling to recruit and retain examiners. You told us that it is not possible to increase the pay scale for these roles without increasing the pay of people on the equivalent grade throughout the Civil Service.¹ How does DVSA intend to improve the attractiveness of the driving examiner role and increase recruitment if no changes are being made to the current offer for this position?
- 3) Your statement says that rules for test booking will be reviewed. What will the timescale be for this review, and when do you expect new rules to be in effect?
- 4) Your statement says that DVSA will take "measures to prevent the resale of driving test appointments". What measures are under consideration? You told us in December that you are "considering all options in an attempt to clamp down on unscrupulous

¹ Qq67–69, Evidence session 4 December 2024, [HC 437](#)

behaviour”² including legislating. If this requires parliamentary time to alter legislation, will this be prioritised?

- 5) You said in your appearance before the Committee that the DVSA’s IT system is relatively old and that “there is an intention to have an improved technology system, which might allow further protection measures to be put in place.”³ Our predecessor Committee was told in July 2023 by DVSA that the booking system was at end of life, and that DVSA were building a new booking system.⁴ Why has there been no progress in upgrading the DVSA’s booking system since then, and what is the timescale for a new system to be introduced?
- 6) You have said that terms and conditions for driver training businesses managing test bookings will be strengthened; in what ways will they be strengthened, and when will this be put into effect?
- 7) Your statement said that DVSA would hold consultations relating to increasing waiting times for test rebooking by candidates who fail by making multiple serious or dangerous faults, abuse driving examiners or fail to attend their test:
 - a) What is the timeframe for this consultation?
 - b) Who is to be included in this consultation?
 - c) Will the consultation include questions about options for increasing the 24 week booking limit?
- 8) In evidence we heard a view that the cost of a practical test, unchanged for 15 years, might be a contributory factor to changed learner behaviour, resulting in many candidates taking their test too early. You said to us that “there is no question; we are going to have to review fees, not just in the DVSA.”⁵ Is the Government intending to conduct a review into fees?
- 9) The evidence we heard suggested that the ‘Ready to Pass?’ campaign has been good, but with limited reach.⁶ We welcome the increased focus on this campaign. How will the DVSA expand the ‘Ready to Pass?’ campaign and how will the agency measure the campaign’s success?
- 10) It has been [reported](#) that there is a large variance of pass rates across the country, with candidates being 15 times more likely to pass in some areas comparatively. What is DVSA doing to ensure testing consistency across the UK?
- 11) In oral evidence we heard concerning evidence regarding sexual assaults against DVSA staff. In your letter to us dated 23 January 2025, you provided statistics for assaults against staff. How are sexual assaults specifically recorded and identified within this data? If they are not, will you consider doing so from now on?

The ability to drive enables many opportunities for both work and education, particularly for younger people. Providing candidates with access to driving tests in a timely manner directly from DVSA and not third parties is an ambition that we hope can be achieved as soon as possible.

We plan to keep a watching brief on this issue and would like to receive from the Department updates every two months on a) current waiting times for tests, b) progress

² Q85 Evidence session 4 December 2024, [HC 437](#)

³ Q83 Evidence session 4 December 2024, [HC 437](#)

⁴ Q49 Evidence session 5 July 2023, [HC 1645](#)

⁵ Q87 Evidence session 4 December 2024, [HC 437](#)

⁶ Q15 Evidence session 4 December 2024, [HC 437](#)

being made by DVSA improving their booking platform's bot mitigation and c) progress on recruitment of additional examiners.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ruth Cadbury". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruth Cadbury MP
Chair, Transport Committee

cc Loveday Ryder, Chief Executive, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency