

## **John Knight – Written Evidence (LBC0134)**

### **Introduction**

I write as an individual and not in my role as a trustee of a community charity. I have less than 120 degrees horizontal field of vision after a stroke, meaning I am unable to drive a car or cycle. COVID-19 means that travelling on public transport is inadvisable.

I ask the Committee to consider whether:

- in the short-term legislation should be revised to accommodate disability issues for driving;
- in the medium to long-term allow the use of autonomous cars for people with disability issues whether they hold a current driving licence or not.

### **Issue**

COVID-19 advice was to avoid public transport and to walk, cycle, or travel in their own car. For many, these were not an option due to ill-health or disability. This increased social isolation and decreased employment opportunities. Those recovering from COVID-19 have had strokes, sight problems, and inability to walk far. Therefore, the problem will increase, whilst the DVLA Medical Group have not provided time for tuition to regain car licenses revoked due to visual field impairment. There is legal uncertainty about autonomous cars.

### **Proposals**

1. In the short term, legislation could be amended to remove the minimum requirement for a horizontal visual field of 120 degrees and, retain the legal requirement to read a registration plate at twenty metres. A peer reviewed paper; *“Driving with Binocular Visual Field Loss? A Study on a Supervised On-Road Parcours with Simultaneous Eye and Head Tracking* states amongst other things: *“In conclusion, our findings support the hypothesis that the extent of visual field per se cannot predict fitness to drive...”*.
2. In the medium to long term, new legislation could permit people with disabilities and impaired vision to “drive” autonomous cars. This would aid greater inclusiveness whether COVID-19 remains or not.

*27 August 2020*