

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) & National Associations Strategic Partnership (NASP) Quarterly Meeting Report

Wednesday 12 July
MS Teams - 16:00 – 18:00

The DVSA and NASP meet on a quarterly basis – this was the third meeting of the year. The meeting was attended by seven representatives from the DVSA and three NASP associations. The purpose of this meeting was for the DVSA to provide an update on the following topics:

- Driver recovery
- Driver policy
- ADI registrar
- ADI examiner
- DVSA Ready to Pass? campaign

The DVSA and NASP both discussed and provided updates on action points noted at previous meetings. The points are as follows:

- Relationship managers – the DVSA is working on a proposal to introduce a relationship manager scheme in the autumn for key stakeholders.
- Organisation chart – NASP has requested an organisation chart highlighting ADI area managers, heads of departments and what their teams do, operational managers (including how many areas there are), LDTMs and key members of staff at DVSA. This has been agreed to be created by September 2023.
- Test centre open days – the external affairs and communication teams are waiting for the proposal to be reviewed by senior team.
- DVSA and NASP agreed to hold an in-person workshop on 1 August 2023.
- Booking driving test and learner behaviour – DVSA and NASP are working together to create a follow up blog to the one posted on 6 July about driving test waiting times.
- Behavioural change workshop – DVSA and NASP agreed to hold this workshop at the end of November/early December. NASP to provide DVSA with dates.
- ADI investigations on GOV.UK – DVSA met with CFI team (who conduct investigations) and it was agreed that basic guidance will be published on gov.uk and request has been made.
- Terms of reference – DVSA and NASP agreed to a 7 day deadline to provide the meeting agenda and action log ahead of quarterly meetings.

Driver services update:

Waiting times for booking a driving test remained high in May, with the average waiting time recorded as 17.3 weeks. The DVSA is aiming to reduce waiting times to 12 weeks by the end of the financial business year (31 March 2024).

There is 7% (100,000 tests) more demand for driving tests this year, caused by the impact from industrial action and having reduced capacity to provide these tests. The DVSA ensured it ringfenced a number of tests for learners who were affected by the industrial action so that learners could reschedule their tests as close to their original driving test as possible.

The DVSA has seen a change in booking behaviour following the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, the average customer would wait until their ADI confirmed they were ready to sit their driving test, however, ADIs have recorded an increase in the number of learners who book their tests before they have started learning to drive. This means there are a high number of tests that are not ready to be delivered. The DVSA lost 1 million driving tests since the Covid-19 pandemic but have since made these 1 million driving tests available again. The DVSA confirmed it has delivered 550,000 of those tests and the remaining 450,000 are available.

The DVSA has been actively encouraging driving examiner recruitment by running a large recruitment campaign to attract high quality and a diverse range of driving examiners. Since April 2021, there have been 474 examiners who have entered active testing. The rate of examiner attrition is 15 per month.

The DVSA has procured new software in the deployment teams to help book driving tests for driving examiners who work on a shift or part-time basis. This should increase the number of available tests and release these tests further in advance, allowing flexibility for both driving examiners and learners.

Driver policy update:

BOTs:

The DVSA and NASP discussed how they can work together to improve the support and guidance ADIs need to encourage learners and change booking behaviour back to pre-Covid-19 behaviour.

The DVSA is targeting businesses that have breached their booking terms and conditions. So far, 177 businesses have been suspended from using the DVSA booking service. IT and technology teams at DVSA are clamping down on parties using IP addresses that are problematic. DVSA welcomed ADIs who informed them about phishing scams and fraudulent activity.

DVSA and NASP discussed the potential of enforcing penalties against learners, ADIs and third parties who abuse the system.

Booking behaviour:

The DVSA plans on posting a blog on the 'safe driving for life' website, which will target young learner drivers and will encourage them to book their driving tests when they are ready.

The DVSA is going to gain more data and insight from learners who have received their driving test results by adding additional questions to the ongoing satisfaction survey in the test result email.

ADI registrar update:

Not all ADIs are aware of the national standard. The DVSA and NASP discussed how they can work together to educate ADIs about how to improve their standards through CPD courses, what CPD is and where CPD can be accessed. Before any changes to the standard checks are introduced, the DVSA and NASP want to ensure ADIs are better prepared.

Criminal records:

DVSA informed NASP that their criminal record check supplier recently moved their contact centre. This has resulted in the supplier not being able to answer questions or provide relevant information. Weekly meetings are taking place between DVSA and their supplier. The DVSA will update NASP once this issue has been resolved.

ORDIT:

A number of NASP members asked for clarification around the number of ADIs that are allowed to register for ORDIT – it was previously believed to be a maximum of 150 members. The DVSA confirmed there is no limit on the number of approved ADIs on the register and encouraged as many ADIs to join as possible to increase the standard of instruction. DVSA will be working to educate ADIs about ORDIT and help those who apply to be better prepared.

ADI examiner update:

The DVSA is actively recruiting from the driving examiner workforce. There are 5 newly trained ADI examiners and they are in the process of recruiting another 10 to train in September. The DVSA offers an intense training programme which includes 5 week residential training and ongoing development opportunities following the programme. The DVSA is aiming to recruit a further 15 ADI examiners next year.

TIP:

There are currently 39,550 registered ADIs (March 2023). Since the changes to the parameters in May 2023, the DVSA has seen a positive reduction in the number of ADIs hitting 4 parameters. There are now 4,200 ADIs hitting that target compared to 10,000 ADIs before the implemented changes were made.

Engagement calls:

DVSA have delivered 4,624 calls in total. The feedback on engagement calls remains positive and the DVSA continues to receive calls from ADIs requesting an engagement call to have their standards check.

ADI performance reports:

The DVSA receives around 100 requests per week. They have been working with Government Digital Services to improve the way ADIs can request their data. DVSA will be working to promote the new online form (Request your Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) Driving Test Data Report) for ADIs to complete.

Book to hold:

If there are no suitable available tests, then the PDI can pay for a test and put it on hold (they will provide a preferred test centre and date) Deployment will then allocate a test.

The DVSA confirmed that part 2 figures are currently 480 and part 3 are currently 396. The DVSA is working towards a target for all PDIs to be offered a test within 15 days of joining the hold list. They are currently ahead of target and offering tests within 11 days of joining.

Ready to Pass update?:

DVSA and NASP will be holding a behavioural change workshop on 1 August. Topics of discussion will include:

- Encouraging ADIs to complete CPD
- Encouraging ADIs to sit in on driving tests

Working as a Driving instructor results:

14.7 % of all ADIs responded to the Working as a Driving Instructor survey. The DVSA will publish these results early August.

Barriers to taking mock tests:

Recent survey feedback highlights that learners are reluctant to sit a mock test for the following reasons; its too expensive, they have already taken a real test and failed, learners are happy to watch a YouTube video and their ADI did not offer a mock test.

The DVSA is working on creating guidance for learners who want to take a mock test.

NASP update:

NASP asked DVSA to consider updating the 'find driving schools, lessons and instructors' page on GOV.UK to display if driving instructors offer manual and/or automatic training and mock tests for learners.

The DVSA said that this work will need to wait and be discussed as part of our future conversations with NASP and wider industry about making better consumer information available to learners and their parents.

NASP also requested an updated version of the key main areas of failure/underperformance of ADIs on Standards Checks/Part 3s as members find this information useful and it can be incorporated into CPD in this area to help trainers work on any issues. This will be discussed as part of workshop we are holding with NASP on ADI qualification process in October.

Future meetings:

The next DVSA and NASP quarterly meeting will take place on 7 November 2023.